

FUTURE FICTION

15c-JULY

**LAUGHTER OUT
OF SPACE**

by DENNIS CLIVE

THE POISON REALM
by JOHN COLERIDGE

LIQUID HELL
by NEIL R. JONES
AND OTHERS

FUTURE FICTION



\$6.85
to
\$35.00

Choose
FOR YOURSELF
FALSE TEETH
AT
Amazingly Low Prices
—BY MAIL—
SEND NO MONEY



Posed by a Professional Model

THE TESTIMONIAL LETTERS WE PUBLISH are communications that customers have sent to us without solicitation and without pay. We have large numbers of such missives. We never print anyone's letter without previous consent. We believe that each of our customers who has written to us enthusiastically endorsing our dental plates is sincere. We do not, however, intimate or represent that you will receive the same results in any instance that these customers describe. What is important to you is that when you pay for our teeth, WE GUARANTEE IF YOU ARE NOT 100% SATISFIED IN EVERY RESPECT WITH THE TEETH WE WILL MAKE FOR YOU. AFTER YOU HAVE WORN THEM AS LONG AS 60 DAYS, WE WILL GLADLY REFUND TO YOU EVERY CENT YOU HAVE PAID US FOR THEM.

BEFORE

AFTER



Mrs. Elsie Boland of Norton, Kansas, writes:

"Enclosed find two pictures. One shows how I looked before I got my teeth; the other one shows how I look afterwards. My teeth are certainly beautiful. I have not had any other out since the day I got them, except to clean them."



Harry Willoughby, Adairville, Kentucky, writes:

"I have received my teeth and am FROID OF THEM."



Mrs. Geo. G. Conklin, Bridgeport, Connecticut, writes:

"I received my set of teeth, I wear them day and night. I have good reason to be well pleased with them. Thank you very much."

FREE

IMPRESSION MATERIAL. Catalog with our new low prices and information. Don't put this off. Do it TODAY! CLIP COUPON OR WRITE. A one cent postcard with name and address plainly written is all that is necessary.

We also Repair or Reproduce Old Plates—48-hour Service

UNITED STATES DENTAL COMPANY

Dr. Ernest French, Supervisor of Laboratory

1555 Milwaukee Ave., Dept. 7-A40, Chicago, Ill.

MADE - TO - MEASURE DENTAL PLATES DIRECT FROM OUR LABORATORY TO YOU!

We make to measure for you **Individually—BY MAIL.**—Dental Plates for men and women—from an impression of your own mouth taken by you at your home. We have thousands of customers all over the country wearing teeth we made by mail at sensible prices.



AT ROCK-BOTTOM PRICES

If you find out what others have paid for theirs, you will be astounded when you see how little ours will cost you! By reading our catalog, you will learn how to save half or more on dental plates for yourself. Monthly payments possible.

ON 60 DAYS' TRIAL

Make us prove every word we say. Wear our teeth on trial for as long as 60 days. Then, if you are not perfectly satisfied with them, they will not cost you a cent. Isn't that fair enough?

WITH MONEY - BACK GUARANTEE OF SATISFACTION

We take this risk. We guarantee that if you are not completely satisfied with the teeth we make for you, then any time within 60 days we will immediately refund every cent you have paid us for them. We take your word. You are the judge.

HAND-CARVED SET



PARTIAL



ROOFLESS

HIGH-GRADE MATERIAL AND EXPERT WORKMANSHIP

TRY our practically unbreakable ROOFLESS, PARTIAL, and TRANSLUCENT plates. Our dentures are set with pearly-white, genuine, porcelain teeth; constructed from high-grade materials, with expert workmanship, to give long service. We make all styles of plates. A dentist who has had many years' experience in making dental plates supervises the making of each plate. . . .

MAIL THIS COUPON NOW
FREE UNITED STATES DENTAL COMPANY

Dept. 7-A40, 1555 Milwaukee Ave., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Send, without obligation, your FREE Impression material, catalog, and information.

NAME

ADDRESS
(Print Clearly)

GUARANTEED TIRES!

GOODYEAR·GOODRICH FIRESTONE·U.S. and Other Standard Makes



FREE!
Electric Lantern
With Every
2 Tires Ordered

Complete with batteries and newest type reflector bulb. Ready for instant use. Strong, steady light. Useful everywhere. Order now.

WORLD'S LOWEST TIRE PRICES

You'll marvel at these amazing savings!

Thousands of smart, thrifty tire users all over the United States vouch for the gratifying **Long, Hard Service** given by our **Standard Brand** tires reconditioned with high-grade materials and latest methods by our tire specialists. **Order Now at low prices listed below.**

Our 23 Years' Experience

makes it possible for us to offer tires at **lowest prices with legal agreement** to replace at one-half price any tire that fails to give **Twelve (12) months' service.**

EVERY TIRE GUARANTEED

BALLOON TIRES

Size Rim	Tires	Tubes
20x4-40-21	\$2.15	\$1.05
20x4.50-20	2.35	1.05
20x4.50-21	2.40	1.15
28x4.75-19	2.45	1.25
28x4.75-20	2.50	1.25
28x5.00-19	2.55	1.25
30x5.00-20	2.55	1.25
6.25-17	2.90	1.35
28x5.25-18	2.90	1.35
29x5.25-19	2.95	1.35
30x5.25-20	2.95	1.35
31x5.25-21	3.25	1.35
6.50-17	3.35	1.40
28x5.50-18	3.35	1.40
29x5.50-19	3.35	1.45
6.00-17	3.40	1.40
30x5.00-18	3.40	1.45
31x5.00-19	3.45	1.55
32x5.00-20	3.45	1.55
33x5.00-21	3.65	1.55
32x5.50-20	3.75	1.75
6.00-16	3.75	1.45

REGULAR CORD TIRES

Size	Tires	Tubes	Size	Tires	Tubes
20x3 1/2	\$2.35	\$0.95	33x4 1/2	\$3.45	\$1.45
31x4	2.95	1.25	34x4 1/2	3.45	1.45
32x4	2.95	1.25	30x5	3.55	1.65
33x4	2.95	1.25	33x5	3.75	1.75
34x4	3.25	1.35	35x5	3.95	1.75
32x4 1/2	3.35	1.45			

HEAVY DUTY TRUCK TIRES

Size	Tires	Tubes	Size	Tires	Tubes
30x5	\$4.25	\$1.95	34x7	\$10.95	\$4.65
33x5	3.95	1.75	38x7	10.95	4.65
34x5	4.25	2.25	38x8	11.45	4.95
32x6	7.95	2.95	40x8	12.25	4.95
36x5	9.95	4.45			

TRUCK BALLOON TIRES

Size	Tires	Tubes	Size	Tires	Tubes
6.00-20	\$3.75	\$1.65	7.50-20	\$6.95	\$3.75
6.50-20	4.45	1.95	8.25-20	8.95	4.95
7.00-20	6.95	3.95	9.00-20	10.95	5.95
			9.75-20	13.95	6.45

ALL OTHER SIZES DEALERS WANTED

"WELL PLEASED"

"I was well pleased with the tires I received from you a short time ago, and would like three more like them. Enclosed find \$3.00 deposit."

W. N. Williams, Utah

"GOOD SERVICE"

"The tire I ordered from you sometime ago is giving good service. Enclosed find price for another cord tire, size 33x4."

C. L. Webb, W. Va.

Please Use Order Coupon
PERRY-FIELD TIRE & RUBBER CO.
2328 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Dept. DAG-20
Gentlemen: Please ship at once to—

Name.....

Route & Box No.....

City.....State.....

Quan.	Size Tires	Size Tubes	Price Each	Total

SEND ONLY \$1.00 DEPOSIT

on each tire ordered. (\$3.00 on each Truck Tire.) We ship balance C. O. D. Deduct **5 per cent** if cash is sent in full with order. To fill order promptly we may substitute brands if necessary. **ALL TUBES BRAND NEW—GUARANTEED—**

**ALL TUBES BRAND NEW
FINEST QUALITY—GUARANTEED**

PERRY-FIELD TIRE & RUBBER CO.

2328 S. Michigan Ave. Dept. DAG-20 Chicago, Ill.

FUTURE FICTION

Vol. 1, No. 3



July, 1940

SIX ASTOUNDING NOVELETS

- LIQUID HELL**.....Neil R. Jones 8
Naz Hulan finds himself battling amidst the bloodiest mob of space-pirates in the solar system! Himself an outlaw, he struggles for supremacy on a tiny asteroid, where he is trapped to die a lingering death in a lake of acid!
- LAUGHTER OUT OF SPACE**.....Dennis Clive 24
A world of laughing death, where a plague of madness promises the destruction of all Mankind!—such is the world that Conrad Smith fights to save! But the powerful evil out of space is not to be conquered—and we promise you a powerful, realistic climax that will leave you awestruck!
- PROPHECY OF DOOM**.....Ross Rocklyne 43
Argus Nesban was the mester of the Imperians—the handful of people that composd the last remnant of the human race—and he upheld the Rule that Knowledge should be shunned as an evil! The Rule demands that the Imperians ignore the prophecy of Zage-mean—He-Who-Broke-The-Rule—a prophecy of certain Doom to Man's last stand!
- THE CITY UNDER THE SEA**.....Duane W. Rime 55
Two undersea explorers are thrust into a weird adventure amidst a kingdom beneath the waves! Huffman finds himself battling a strange science, to save the surface world from the traitorous plans of Belton, conspirer against his own people!
- THE MAGNIFICENT POSSESSION**.....Isaac Asimov 71
After many patient years of painstaking experiment, Walter Sills makes the discovery that promises him great fame and a million dollars! But success is no bed of roses, as Sills finds out—trouble and terror threaten from every side!
- THE POISON REALM**.....John Coleridge 83
Two helpless humans in a far world of another dimension, Lone and Terrance fight a torturing doom as the poisonous gases of a strange atmosphere threaten a painful death in that weird jungle of alien monsters!

AN AMAZING SHORT STORY

- GRAVITY OFF!**.....Leslie F. Stone 100
Jerry Moore looked like anybody else—except that his face became very red when he stood upright—for "upright" to us was "upside-down" to him! Tired of walking on ceilings as a side-show freak, he considers just letting himself fall into the sky!

SPECIAL FEATURES

- FAN MAG DIGEST**..... 41
LETTERS FROM READERS..... 66
FANTASY TIMES.....James V. Taurasi..82

COVER BY SCOTT

FUTURE FICTION, published every other month by Double Action Magazines, Inc., 2256 Grove St., Chicago, Ill. Editorial and executive offices, 60 Hudson St., N. Y. C. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Chicago, Ill. Copyright 1940 by Double Action Magazines, Inc. Yearly subscription, 75c. For advertising rates write to the Double Action Group, 60 Hudson St., N. Y. C. Printed in U. S. A. The Cuneo Press, Inc.

OH BOY! DON'T I FEEL GREAT!



JOHN'S ADVICE

JIM GOT A "TRIM-SHAPE"



WILL MAKE YOU FEEL GREAT, TOO!

Don't let waistline bulge get you down! Streamline that dragging, sagging "bay-window" with a Trim-Shape—the slenderizing man's step-in belt that brings real mid-section support. Thousands of men have found new comfort the Trim-Shape way. One wearer writes: "I found nothing so comfortable and restful. It fairly lifts you off your tired feet! Thanks for the invention."

You, too, can guard yourself against "middle-age slouch" and the dangers of undue strain. You, too, can have invigorating all-day support where you need it most! Trim-Shape is a pleasure to wear. Order one today and rejoice in new found comfort, added energy—enjoy at once a snappy, youthful appearance, the posture of sparkling health!

HOLD THAT LINE!

WEAR THIS
SLENDERIZING
SCIENTIFICALLY MADE
SUPPORTER-BELT



LOOK
INCHES
SLIMMER
AT ONCE!

WITH THE
"Trim-Shape"
FLAT FRONT

WITH FRONT LACES FOR PERFECT ADJUSTMENT — ONLY \$2.95

Trim-Shape is scientifically constructed to provide perfect comfort, perfect support. Lace-adjustable front panels, made of durable linen cloth, hold your figure the way you want it—merely tighten or loosen the laces—and presto! your mid-section is "Trim-Shaped."

LIGHTWEIGHT-POWERFULLY STRONG

Here's the secret of Trim-Shape—it's made of 3-way stretch elastic material, a light-

weight "miracle" cloth that's powerfully strong. Washing actually preserves its strength. Broad 8-inch metal ribs in front—supplementary ribs in back—absolutely prevent curling, rolling or bulging. Extra strong 12-strand elastic taping holds belt snugly at waist and thighs. Detachable air-cooled pouch of fine, soft double yarn gives real masculine protection, healthful uplift without chafing. An exclusive, slenderizing abdominal aid—obtainable only from us.



"SEND ME ANOTHER"

"I have just received the Trim-Shape and I am just tickled with it. Please send me another." P. A. E.—No. Car.

"SIMPLY MARVELOUS"

"My husband received his Trim-Shape today and thinks it's simply marvelous." Mrs. G. H.—La.

"WONDERFUL"

"I sure think that supporter-belt is wonderful." B. W.—Cal.

SEND NO MONEY

We take the risk. We guarantee this slenderizing, comfortable supporter-belt will give you thrilling satisfaction. If not, you don't spend a cent. Send no money now. Just mail this coupon. Pay postman \$2.95, plus a few cents postage, when your Trim-Shape arrives in plain package. Try Trim-Shape for 10 days. If it doesn't make a "world of difference" send it back and your \$2.95 will be refunded promptly.

FITS COMFORTABLY SNUG

Just like magic, Trim-Shape flattens that bulging "corporation" and makes you look inches slimmer—the minute you put it on! You can feel and see the difference at once. Trim-Shape fits you snug as a glove—nobody can tell you're wearing one! Your back is braced—your shoulders squared—your clothes fit you better, too! "Trim-Shape" yourself for better times!

-----10-DAY FREE TRIAL-----

S. J. WEGMAN CO., Dept. E36
70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

Send me for 10 days' approval a genuine Trim-Shape. Upon receiving package, I will pay postman \$2.95, plus postage. If not satisfied, I may return it for prompt refund.

My present waist measure is.....
(Send during the size of your waist if no tape measure is handy)

Name

Address

City

☐ We stand postage if you enclose \$2.95 now. Mark box.

- WE SHIP ON APPROVAL -

Please mention DOUBLE ACTION GROUP when answering advertisements

Your credit is OK

I'm going to send you your choice of these selected FEATURES



BULOVA'S \$3375

Miss America
B251—Newest Bulova feature;
17 jewels; tiny 10K yellow
gold filled case. Gor-
geous creation priced low.
Complete in gift box.
\$5.28 a month



BRIDAL SET \$2975

A87/C11—3 diamond
Engagement Ring; 7 dia-
mond Wedding Ring;
both 14K yellow gold.
\$2.88 a month



BULOVA'S \$3375

New Senator
M212—Bulova's newest feature for
men—a 17 jewel watch with 10K
yellow rolled gold plate case.
A new 1940 feature.
\$5.28 a month



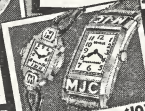
1/4 CARAT \$4250

A173—Greatest diamond value
in our history—a brilliant
1/4 carat diamond attractively
set in 14K yellow gold Engage-
ment Ring. A remarkable value
at our low price.
\$4.15 a month



YOUR CHOICE KENT WATCHES \$1595

P200—Ladies' Kent Heart Watch
with bracelet to match. K183—
Man's Kent round watch with
sweep-second hand. Both
7 jewels; 10K yellow rolled
gold plate cases.
\$1.58 a month



BENRUS Signet \$1975

Watches—Choice
T541—Ladies' Watch. 0545—
Men's Watch. Initials set in
Man's Watch. 10K yellow rolled
gold plate; 7 jewels. Mention
number and initials.
\$1.88 a month



MAN'S INITIAL RING \$1695

1202—Massive Ring with
2 diamonds and initial
on black onyx. 10K yellow
gold.
\$1.48 a month



Carnelian Cameo HEART LOCKET \$450

W711—Genuine carne-
lian cameo in yellow
gold filled Heart
Locket. With chain.
\$1 a month

SEND ME \$1

and I'll send you your choice
of these selected VALUES
for 10 DAY TRIAL and
10 MONTHS TO PAY.
Money back if not
Satisfied...

Yes—your credit is OK with me—I'LL
TRUST YOU. Tell me what you want—put
a dollar bill in an envelope with your
name, address, occupation and a few
other facts about yourself—I'll send you
choice of these selected values for your
approval and 10 day trial. If you are
not satisfied that you have received
good, honest dollar for dollar value,
send it back and I'll promptly return
your dollar. If satisfied, you'll pay in
10 small monthly amounts you'll never
miss.

Jim Feeney

Sales Mgr.

FREE TO ADULTS...

A Postcard brings my complete 48-Page
Catalog showing hundreds of diamonds,
watches, jewelry and silverware, all
offered on my 10-Months-to-Pay Plan.

S.W. Sweet

MAIL ORDER DIVISION OF FINLAY STRAUS, Inc.

Dept. 990-B 1670 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

DISCLOSED AT LAST

Strange Secrets that provide
a Master Formula to a

**LIFE of WEALTH • LOVE •
HEALTH • HAPPINESS**
and **PROSPERITY!**



THE KEY TO SUPREME MASTERY UNLOCKS THE DOOR TO YOUR LATENT POWERS

Through countless ages in every ancient land there have been infinitely wise men who were the oracles of their times. These men performed long hidden rites which they closely guarded. Through the practice of *Eclecticism*—a system of philosophic knowledge—they were enabled to perform amazing feats—miracles which people could not understand. All of them had the power to **ACHIEVE THAT WHICH THEY DESIRED!**

Now, in a sensational new book, **"THE DOORWAY TO YOUR SUCCESS"**, a simple explanation is given to these long hidden secrets. For the first time it is told how you, too, may "get out of the shadows and into the light of understanding"; how you can **Control Your Destiny** by breaking the shackles which bind the hidden powers within **YOU!**

WRITTEN FOR MEN AND WOMEN WHOSE MOST PRESSING NEED IS FOR MONEY!

Long hidden under high sounding names and cloaked by mysterious rites, this amazing book reveals that almost any person of ordinary intelligence can achieve untold success by utilizing the simple rules of Universal Nature. You are shown, step by step, how to put into practice certain fundamental principles which will help you solve your problems of Health, Business Success,

Love and Happiness. The Bible tells us that "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." What you think you are—**YOU ARE!** You can attain anything you desire; overcome seemingly impossible obstacles; win riches, bend people to your will if you use the Master Formula of Power Thinking as revealed in **"THE DOORWAY TO YOUR SUCCESS"**.

ACTUAL SUCCESS EXPERIENCES DISCLOSED FOR THE FIRST TIME

By way of proving the Great Truths which are unveiled here for the first time, the author has devoted an important part of **"THE DOORWAY TO YOUR SUCCESS"** to true experiences of people who have practiced the principles explained and who have **WON SUCCESS** in the face of almost impossible odds. **NOTHING HAS BEEN WITHHELD!** Case 1 tells of a man who had to succeed within a limited time or go bankrupt. In 30 days he had paid off his debt! Case 2 describes a doorman who needed \$5 that afternoon and the almost uncanny and unexpected manner in which it came to him.

Case 3 relates the true story of an old woman who was reduced to starving milk before dawn and who received the \$500 she desired before night. Case 4 tells the experience of a young man who could not afford to marry until he had learned the Universal Secret. How he won his love and achieved happiness is related here. These and other **TRUE EXPERIENCES** will show you the way to Supreme Mastery over every situation so that you, too, may attain **SUCCESS, LOVE, WEALTH AND HAPPINESS!**

READ IT AT OUR EXPENSE—10 DAYS—FREE!

The thrill which will come to you as you read page after page of **"THE DOORWAY TO YOUR SUCCESS"** will be an inspiration. You'll wonder that you had never seen nor recognized nor understood the simple truths as they are unfolded. Here, at long last, is a book which throws down the challenge at your feet, **"WIN SUCCESS, LOVE, HEALTH, WEALTH AND HAPPINESS or perish in**

misery". Accept the challenge by securing your copy of this book.

SEND NO MONEY

Just deposit the sum of \$1 plus a few cents postage with the mailman when he delivers, **"THE DOORWAY TO YOUR SUCCESS"**. Read it, study it 10 days. If you feel that it can not help you—return it and your deposit will be refunded at once! The first step to Success is positive action—so mail the coupon at once.

This Coupon May Start You on the ROAD TO GLORY

Entire Contents Copyright A.P.C. 1940

AN AMAZING BOOK THAT MAY CHANGE THE COURSE OF YOUR ENTIRE LIFE!

Some of the Subjects Covered:

- How to Get What You Want
- How to Attract Riches to You
- How to Win a Job—and Keep It
- How to Bring Out Your Undeveloped Talents
- How to Attract the Love of Others
- How to Attain Happiness in Marriage
- How You Can Win Mastery Over Others
- How to Break the Shackles of Fear
- How You Can Direct Your Personal Forces
- How to Make Each Daily Act Successful
- How the Power of Thoughts Can Be Turned into Actual Assets
- How to Retain Youthfulness of Spirit, Actions and Deeds
- How Your Visions Can Be Turned into Actual Accomplishments
- And scores of other subjects too numerous to mention

Now Only
\$1.00
BUT PERHAPS
WORTH
THOUSANDS
TO YOU!



ACADEMY PUBLISHING CO. (Self Improvement Division)

Academy Building
Dept. DA-7
Newark, New Jersey.

I send a book like "The Doorway to Your Success". Please send a copy at once. I will deposit \$1.00 (plus a few pennies postage) with the mailman on delivery with the understanding that I will return the book in 10 days for refund if not entirely satisfactory.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY.....STATE.....

IMPORTANT! By enclosing a Dollar Bill with your order you can **SAVE** Postal Delivery Charges. The terms of our Guarantee remain the same.

Please mention **DOUBLE ACTION GROUP** when answering advertisements.

LIQUID HELL

by NEIL R. JONES

He was overcome and rolled into the liquid hell!



Nez Hulan, the half-metal space-pirate extraordinary, joins a powerful group of buccaneers—bringing him into conflict with a competing gang on a lonely asteroid—where death awaits him in a shining pool of deadly acid!



CHAPTER I THE HUMAN ROBOT

"GIVE this 'un to the disintegrator gun." A tall, lanky pirate jerked a thumb viciously at Hulan, eyes gleaming. "First he is; then he ain't."

This produced a guffaw of amused laughter.

"Maybe he thinks that steel skull cap o' his'll pertect 'im," offered another.

Carconte, bald of head, squat and, like the rest of his motley band of space-pirates, careless and slovenly in his garish appearance, walked up and surveyed Nez Hulan from head to foot. His dark face with its down-curved mustaches, reflected evil. Hulan, on the other hand, was none the less

sinister, yet his pale, chalky features suggested deviltry beyond the simpler execution of Carconte's lawless band. His brain worked rapidly beneath his aluminum skull. Death, such as he had meted out to others, now stared him in the face, death for the second time in his colorful career.

"What were you doing alone on that ship we just took?" Carconte flung at him menacingly.

"Escaping from the earth," rasped Hulan. "I am an outlaw wanted on all three worlds."

"A likely story! Put him in the gun! We'll see how big a flash he can make! Terseg! Luddock!"

As Carconte snapped these names, two pirates sprang forward to seize Hulan. An irritated expression darted into the prisoner's face, and contempt momentarily replaced his uneasiness. He lifted his arm and sent the first pirate, a snipe-nosed individual whose face bore a striking resemblance to the Martian terseg bird, into a surprised heap on the floor, dealing the second brigand a blow which sent him rolling unconscious to the feet of Carconte. Sudden fury had seized Hulan, and his malign features became terrible to see as he reached suddenly down and dragged Terseg to his feet, squeezing him with those long arms. The pirate's eyes popped in agony from his head, and his breath rushed out of him. He gasped and howled as many closed in upon Hulan and overcame him.

"Help—help me get away! He's breaking my—ribs! Steel—steel arms! I—uh—uh-h-h!"

Many hands were on Hulan, and once more he was aware of guns imbedded against his body. His sudden fury vanished as quickly as it had come, and with the return of cold, calculating reason came his fear of Carconte's intentions. Terseg dropped weakly to the floor, muttering to himself.

"Steel arms—I could feel 'em! Damn near done fer me, he did!"

IT WAS Zind, he of the olive countenance and Carconte's right hand man, who seized first one of Hulan's hands and then the other, amazed at the strong, metal fingers he saw. Pushing up a sleeve, he found a metal arm. The eyes of Hulan glinted coldly at him, watching his every act with contempt. Carconte seized the metal cap and tried to twist it off. He found it immovable and saw that it coincided neatly with flesh and bone at the forehead.

"What are you, a man or a machine?" queried Zind, who had pulled back Hulan's clothing to reveal the white skin of his body.

"Something of both," replied Hulan with that strange inflection to his voice.

"Why do you wear that metal cap?" Carconte demanded.

"It is the top of my head. My own skull was shattered."

"A—a skull of metal?" Carconte asked hesitatingly, his truculence yielding to stupefied wonder. "But if your skull was crushed or damaged, you would have died!"

"I did die," was the cryptic reply. "I lay dead for nearly a month among the asteroids. I was killed with four companions when a meteor struck our space-ship and crashed through it. One of our company who had been absent during the collision returned to the ship from a nearby asteroid where he had been exploring and guided the ship safely back to the earth. A metal stanchion had pierced my heart. My arms and legs were hopelessly shattered. My skull was smashed, yet there was enough of me left to interest the surgeons in an experiment. They replaced my damaged heart with one of rubber, gave me four mechanical limbs, replaced my shattered skull with an aluminum brain case, and you will notice that my ears are of metal, too. They pick up delicate sounds."

"I recall hearing something about you, now," remarked Zind. "The operation on your brain stimulated your intelligence. You fled the Martian University at Fomar because of two murders."

"Scientific experiments," Hulan corrected him with a merciless smile, his metal arms folded across his chest. "Professor Climmed suddenly when his bones turned to water. A laboratory assistant, too, disappeared entirely."

"What new deviltry have you been up to on the earth?" Zind inquired, his face alight with interest.

"New experiments," replied Hulan carelessly. "It seems that the world does not care to advance science to the extent of a few of their numbers becoming martyrs to it."

"They say that you have no soul, Hulan," Zind pursued, "that you were recalled to life without a human soul."

"What is a soul?" rasped the human robot. "Give me the scientific equivalent of a human soul."

"I can't," the pirate admitted, "nor can anyone, beyond offering theories. It is still to be proved."

"Or disproved," was Hulan's rejoinder.

"You will admit that death changed you radically from your old self."

"It gave me a superior intelligence—almost made me feel sorry for my older self and those doddering idiots who were once my instructors."

CARCONTE had stood silent and open-mouthed at the human robot's recital and his subsequent conversation with Zind. He came to life as another pirate broke into the group with a message.

"We have passed well beyond the area reported to be patrolled by the Interplanetary Guard. None of them picked up our proximity, for none of them have pursued."

"Good, Bender. Be sure a watchful eye is kept. We want no one trailing us, least of all any guardsmen."

"Why do you run from the guard ships?" Hulan clicked.

"The same reason you ran from the earth," the nettled pirate replied swiftly.

"We are outclassed in fighting equipment and ship design."

"But if you had weapons and ships fashioned as good as theirs—or superior—what then?"

"We'd fight!" roared Carconte emphatically.

"I can give them to you—in time," offered Hulan.

"You mean join up with us?" Zind spoke.

"Yes—if you will have me. It will be greatly to your benefit. I am an outlaw, a fugitive, and I have no other haven. I am banned and searched for on two worlds already. I can point you the way to loot and luxuries such as you have never yet had. You can afford to work on a larger scale."

Carconte's eyes glistened in anticipation of the glamorous future drawn so colorfully for him and his men by Nez Hulan. Zind caught his attention and nodded approvingly.

"I ask but one favor," Hulan announced.

"A share of the loot, you mean?"

"Yes, but a share which you may not miss, a share you would rather fell my way than the riches and luxuries."

"Women?" queried a scarred veteran, his horrible face pushed into the group and attentive to Hulan's every word.

"Not exactly," the human robot replied.

"I want human beings for experiment, live ones, and I want a well-equipped laboratory."

"You shall have it!" exclaimed Carconte in heated enthusiasm. "That and more! It is done! Accord me but half of what you promise, and I shall make a lieutenant of you!"

"We were on our way to join another ship when we caught up with you," said Zind. "Together, we are going to loot the *Andronicus* which is carrying a fortune in mazinite metal from Mars to the earth."

"Ever hear of Phrensac?" Carconte asked.

The human robot shook his head slowly.

"He is another space-pirate with a fol-

lowing much like mine. He hides out on Pallas. I once belonged to his band before I organized my own, and I know his place well. My forces, however, are stronger than his, and this ship is a much better fighting ship than the one Phrensac uses."

Across the void sped the ship of Carconte with its newest member to the lawless band. Nez Hulan was a fit acquisition to their ranks. No longer was he the private criminal he had been. He now had others with whom to scheme. The ship of Phrensac caused the proximity detectors to flicker and grow more definitely set as the two ships ranged alongside in the starlit silence and joined airlocks.

Phrensac came aboard. He was a mean and villainous looking individual, rather pinched and small. He had a habit of hooking his thumbs in his belt and letting his fingers relax upon the butts of two atom pistols slung at his sides. His quick little eyes picked out Nez Hulan.

"Who's he?"

"A new one we just picked up. You've heard of Nez Hulan, the human robot?"

EVIDENTLY Phrensac had not, and Carconte went into detail about the man's colorful past. Phrensac was either not greatly interested or else other matters weighed more important with him just then. He nodded his ugly head at Hulan who acknowledged it with a cold wave of the hand, a subtle, contemptuous smile twisting one corner of his mouth slightly, Phrensac was all for business.

"What about the split, Carconte?"

"Same as usual!" barked the leader of the moon pirates.

"Three and two?" demanded Phrensac hotly. "What ——— kind of a Martian calo do you take me for? I'm tired of this thieving split of yours!"

"Then take the *Andronicus* by yourself!" roared Carconte. "I've got the best ship and more man power! We have to split

more ways than you do, and who has to fight the Interplanetary Guard if they come along?"

"If they come along!" sneered Phrensac. "Out of seven jobs we've done together, you've said that every time, and it's only so much ———!"

"Take it or leave it!"

Phrensac grumbled discontentedly about future bargains they might make and of the pressure of existing circumstances making it necessary for them to get going if they were to apprehend the *Andronicus*. He and his men went back to their ship, and both space-ships moved off in the direction of the route to be followed by the *Andronicus*. They were well ahead of schedule, and the *Andronicus* was an hour or more behind time.

When the *Andronicus* found by aid of its proximity detectors a ship lying in its route, the space-vessel slowed its pace and sent out a radio interrogation which was not answered. From behind, another space-ship darted into the field of the detectors and was alongside so quickly that the captain of the *Andronicus* had little opportunity to come to any decision. The silence of the communicator was broken by an order to "settle back" or be bombarded. As Phrensac's ship ranged back towards the locked vessels, Carconte went aboard the *Andronicus* with Zind and Terseg, through the space-lock. They first put the communicator out of operation. Zind took over guidance of the ship, and all three of the space-craft went racing far off the scheduled course of the *Andronicus*, and not until they were more than a million and a half miles distant did they stop to consummate the plundering of the ship. Carconte had verified the neat little fortune in mazinite aboard, and it only remained for his men and those of Phrensac's crew to take it off.

Phrensac came aboard eagerly. In fact, a goodly number from both crews, including Nez Hulan, crowded into the *Andron-*

icus. There were four passengers besides the crew. One of them, a white-haired old man gabbled in continual terror that he was poor, that he had no money for ransom and for them to let him go.

"Shut up, you old idiot!" Phrensac swore luridly and knocked the protesting ancient into a corner. "You're probably worth a million, but we'll get all the ransom we want right here on board!"

CHAPTER II PHRENSAC'S WAY

PHRENSAC'S eyes lit avidly in the treasure room as he surveyed the tall stacks of mazinite metal bars.

"That stuff's easy to melt over and barter! It's good trade on Venus, and what we get on Venus sells well on the earth!"

"Get your two-fifths out, Phrensac, and then we'll take off the rest," ordered Carconte.

Phrensac glowered at his bald-headed partner, but the mean look was lost on Carconte as he looked over the rest of the passengers. Two of them were middle-aged men, probably sales representatives or officials of some company of interplanetary commerce. They were overlooked by Carconte, however, as his eyes feasted upon the remaining passenger, a calm and provokingly insolent slip of a girl barely past her teens.

"Who are you, pretty one?"

"None of your business, pirate!"

Carconte grinned.

"You'd better come with me and learn how to love and respect me," he said, seizing her roughly by the arm.

The girl struggled and beat him viciously, but Carconte guffawed amusedly as she tried ineffectually to bite him.

"Hope she bites your ——— ear off!" swore Phrensac earnestly. "Thought

you said we weren't taking people this time?"

"Changed my mind," Carconte replied, moving the girl towards his own ship. "It's getting a bit lonesome over on the other side of the moon."

"'Specially since the other one died," said Scarface, grinning and showing an alarming loss of teeth.

"Died all right," commented Terseg. "She ran out on to the moon without a space-suit!"

"Shut up, you ———!" was Carconte's warm return. He led the struggling girl to his own ship and locked her there. She fought him until she recognized the uselessness of her strength against his. Fright, however, remained a stranger to the fire in her eyes. Her asperity only quickened Carconte's desire for her.

When Carconte returned, Nez Hulan shook his metal-capped head dismally and frowned his displeasure. "Women only bring trouble," he said.

"Who asked you what you thought!"

Hulan's face betrayed no emotion. What he might have said was lost as one of the pirates on lookout duty came running.

"A guard ship!" he cried. "We've got to get out of here!"

"There, Carconte!" Phrensac spat vindictively. "You'll earn your extra split this time, by God!"

Carconte's face went a shade white, but he swore luridly, consigning the I. G. ship to eternal perdition between quick, snapped orders.

"All my men—back to our ship! Speed away with the *Andronicus* locked to your ship, Phrensac! I'll keep the I. G. ship busy! Unload all the mazinite, cast the *Andronicus* loose and meet me on the other side of the moon!"

THE space-ship of Carconte raced to meet the ship of the Interplanetary Guard. Two sharp blasts leaped out, and

then the pirate craft veered as a roaring blast of destroying power leaped past. After that first exchange, Carconte was careful not to allow his ship to come that close again. Long range firing was continued. The superior weapons of the pursuing ship placed the pirate craft in several tight spots. Carconte was fourteen hours eluding the grim pursuer, and then he had occasion to thank a meteor swarm for confusing their detectors.

"Some time not too far distant, I shall see that running like this is unnecessary," promised Nez Hulan.

"I hope so," Carconte swore fervently and wiped the sweat from his shining head.

They returned to their rendezvous on the moon, that side of the moon never seen from the earth. They hovered in the vicinity for nearly a day, Carconte not daring to land and possibly reveal his hideout to any snooping space-flier in the vicinity and not wishing to go to the trouble of docking his space-ship deep in the interior of the moon. He had a suspicion that Phrensac would not come. Now that he had time to think, it was a marvelous opportunity for Phrensac to double-cross him. The pirate of Pallas had been given plenty of time to loot the *Andronicus* and get to the moon ahead of him. Either Phrensac had double-crossed him or else disaster had overtaken him. Carconte decided to visit the hangout of Phrensac on Pallas and find out.

So intent was Carconte on the business at hand, that he gave little attention to the girl he had kidnaped. She received all comforts and conveniences, and Carconte intended amusing himself with her when his mind was clear of this trouble.

The trip across space was uneventful. The pirates were ever on the alert for the slim cruisers of the Interplanetary Guard, but their route to Pallas lay well beyond the current space-lanes between the various planets at that time, and they encountered no space-craft within range of their proximity detectors. Twenty-three earthly hours

passed before they sighted the asteroids, which at the time, lay in conjunction with Jupiter. Their tiny points of light shone dull in contrast to the scintillating stars ablaze against the ebon velvet of space. They grew gradually in size. Pallas loomed large against its myriad small companions. The miniature world loomed before them. Under Carconte's direction, they came to Phrensac's front door which was a yawning pit amid the rough terrain and crags of Pallas. Carconte was not long left in doubt as to what had happened. His suspicions were verified by a warning blast of power which shook the space-ship from stem to stern. Phrensac's voice issued from the ship's loud speaker, bubbling over with sarcasm and self satisfaction.

"On your way, my dear Carconte! We stand all even up. I have back all of what you've chiselled and bullied me out of. Now, if you want to make a fight of it, just go ahead, but I guess you know this place too well to try anything like that. I'm master here, and you can take your ——— carcass out of here before I blast it into so many little pieces—"

With a vicious oath, Carconte jerked the handle down on the communicator, fairly boiling with rage. "He damn well knows I can't do anything here! Yes, I know his place well — even better than he does! There's a back way to that big cavern of his with the hollowed-out pillar running up through it! He doesn't know that, and I only stumbled on it by accident once myself!"

"What's the game?" demanded Zind.

"We're more than they are," said Carconte. "We can leave just a few with the ship and still get the best of them, if we can come in from behind. Then we'll have all the treasure he has in the place."

CARCONTE ordered the ship away from Pallas and back in the general direction of the earth. Once out of sight, they circled Pallas and came back upon the

antipode to Phrensac's headquarters. Keeping close to the surface, the ship was brought back as near to the pirate's hideout as they dared bring it. Carconte quickly selected Zind and two others to stay with the ship. He opened his cabin door and met the glance of contempt given him by the steel-gray eyes of the unperturbed girl. Giving a grunt of satisfaction, he locked the door again.

"There'll be plenty of fighting," he told his men. "I shall keep in communication with Zind occasionally. Quick, you men, on with your space-suits!" He turned to Hulan. "This will give you a chance to show your mettle, my steel-limbed friend, your metal! Did you get that?"

Carconte laughed uproariously at his own pun. The echoing laughter of his men was more sympathetic than genuine. His own easy assurance in taking the place by storm had not become infectious. They were grimly hoping for the best, yet ready for the worst, if it happened.

They left the space-ship through an airlock and started out over the rough surface. Black shadows thrown into relief from a dwarfed, far-off sun, lay etched in sharp effect. Sharp crags reared their weird, fantastic bulks everywhere. It was not long before their high, awkward leaps carried them from sight of the ship behind these same, rough escarpments. Only Carconte did not seem to be lost. He warned his men against leaping too high, especially when several lost their equilibrium and fell into yawning pits. Soon, they became accustomed to the lack of gravity and were able to use it to the best advantage over the unwalkable surface. In their leaps, height was sacrificed for distance.

Several miles of rough ground were covered in this manner of grasshopper travel before Carconte gathered them by the edge of a ragged pit. It was no different apparently from at least a hundred others over which they had leaped since leaving the space-ship.

"There's a broad ledge two hundred feet down," said Carconte. "We must drop to it."

"Two hundred feet!"

"Not far for this gravity. I have dropped here before."

He spoke an aside to the space-ship. "We are entering the tunnel, Zind. Keep a sharp watch."

CHAPTER III

INTO THE ASTEROID!

ONE by one, they dropped into the pit. When they were all on the ledge in the semi-gloom of their waving lights, Carconte urged them along the tunnel, warning them against the pitfalls and crevices they must pass. They finally reached what appeared to be the end of the tunnel. Carconte, however, shoved aside a balanced slab of rock, and they passed on into further regions.

Farther along, the walls became illuminated by some strange application. Skipping lightly, seeming to float along from one touch of the foot to the next, the pirates kept their arms raised to fend themselves from the rocky walls and ceiling of the tunnel. Suddenly, the weak gravity of Pallas was abruptly strengthened to an attraction equal to that of the earth's surface, so abrupt that the two leading pirates stumbled and fell on their faces, their lights and atom pistols clattering to the floor. Carconte loosed an uncomplimentary curse upon them.

"A gravitational layer has been applied here, I see," rasped Hulan.

"Yes—just like that in space-ships. All the way through these caverns of Phrensac's it is the same."

"They are natural caverns, then?"

"Not entirely. Somebody had this place and enlarged it before Phrensac took it over. He, too, has made many changes here. There are more chambers."

The tunnel descended gradually. Nez Hulan suddenly stopped. There had come a subtle change. Something was different. The human robot stooped and picked up a handful of dust which he threw before him. The larger particles fell to the floor more quickly than the finer motes which settled slowly.

"Air!" he clicked.

"Phrensac's air level is higher than it was," Carconte observed in surprise. "He is probably using stronger machines or else has increased the pressure. We are not a long ways from the largest cavern, the one with the pillar up the center."

Carconte and Vloime led the way, Hulan and the others just behind them. Before they reached the cavern, Carconte had them pause while he crept forward alone. He returned and spoke his discoveries to those who waited and also to Zind far above in the waiting space-ship.

"The cavern is changed. It has been made larger. The tower, or great pillar, is there yet, but it is now the center of a small island surrounded by a lake. The lake is not water. I can't make it out. There is no one in sight."

CARCONTE led them into a vast cavern more than two hundred yards across and fully a hundred feet high. Up through the middle loomed a column, left there when the cavern was dug with rock disintegrators. A small island, rising from a broad, blue pond, constituted the base of the pillar.

"That pillar is hollow," Carconte told them. "There are chambers within and below it—and above it. We must get into that tower."

"What about the lake?" queried Lud-dock. "What is it? How do we get across?"

"I don't know what it is. The lake is something new since I was here."

"The distance is a good two hundred feet or more to that island," Hulan declared. "I don't like the looks of that stuff, either."

"I wonder how deep it is, mused Carconte. "What is it, and why did Phrensac put it there? It's like a moat."

"Is there any other way than the tower of getting to the treasure chambers?" Hulan asked.

"The tower is the only way of getting to any of Phrensac's quarters from this direction. He and his men are all up in the top chambers waiting to see if we'll return and attack."

"I see no entrances on this side of the tower, only that little window up near the ceiling."

"There are more openings, but they are closed. There is a secret opening in the base of the pillar. I hope that has not been changed."

Hulan picked up a fragment of rock and threw it forcibly into the blue pond. The liquid was thicker than water, so it seemed, for after being splashed and ruffled, it settled back and became tranquil. The human robot next lay down on the rocky ledge at the pool's edge and let a fist of his space-suit barely touch the contents. The others gathered round as he withdrew it. The wet patch of metal became corroded, changed color, slowly dissolving and dripped away until the liquid was gone, leaving a ragged hole through the metal.

"That's the most destructive liquid I've ever seen outside of a laboratory!" rasped Hulan, staring in dismayed surprise at the vast expanse of the pond. "If it acts so rapidly upon metal, what would it do to human flesh?"

"That's bad stuff," Carconte interposed. "We must get across there some way or we don't even get near the treasure chambers. Phrensac has certainly come to guard his treasure well."

Hulan continued to stare moodily at the pool of deadly liquid, contemplating the small island with its towering pillar.

"Are there any chambers beneath the lake bed?"

"No—not before the lake was put in, at

least," Carconte replied. "There are chambers cut from the rock which lay beyond the cavern and are lower than the lake level, but they are not under it. The treasure chambers are located lower than this lake."

"Then it will not be difficult to cross—though it may prove dangerous," Hulan intoned unemotionally, as was his nature.

"What do you mean?" Carconte demanded quickly.

"The synthetic gravitation on which we stand here at the edge of the lake does not prevail over the lake. The distance measured by terms of Pallas' gravity is not too great from here to the island for a man to jump."

"And what if the bottom of the lake is artificially gravitated?"

"We can quickly determine that."

L EANING over, the human robot picked up a chunk of loose rock and gave it an easy toss in the direction of the island. It soared halfway before it dropped into the lake with a dull splash. Other pirates made the test, several throwing to the island and hitting the tower. One throw missed the tower but passed over a portion of the island. The result was curious and proved beyond a doubt the truth of Hulan's contention. Above the island, the stone took a sudden dip and then kept on going, falling abruptly when it reached the other shore.

"There is no artificial gravity to attract an object over the lake, only the natural weak gravity of Pallas," Hulan rasped. "The island and the shores are gravitated. A man may easily leap from here to the island."

"You try it then!" snapped the snipe-nosed Terseg.

The metal-limbed man surveyed them with cold, darting eyes, his supercilious attitude changed to a deep scowl.

"Yes—you try it!" Carconte barked with sudden savageness. "Prove your mettle—or metal!" He laughed loudly at the repetition of his joke.

Hulan was nervously taken aback. He was the thinker in this matter, not the doer, else he would have found himself more circumspect in suggesting such a course. From the dark, purposeful faces of Carconte and his men, his eyes shifted to the lake and the hell of brief agony it portended should he fall into it. He realized that its content was made up of concentrated acids which from his brief examination he was unable to classify. He was entirely willing that someone else carry the initiative of his untried theories. He turned and caught Carconte's vindictive glare, and the careless shift of Carconte's hand to the butt of his atom pistol made Hulan aware that like his theory, he, too, was untried among this band of space-buccaneers and that there were deaths more sudden and sure than that which threatened from the lake.

He believed in his theory, yet there were sufficient chances of mishap to cause his hesitation. Suppose he should slip in taking off above this liquid hell? Or what if he missed the island in his leap? It was a long way and called for an accurate aim. He might even clear one end of the island and fall beyond it. He had made all these mental reservations to himself while propounding the ease with which it was possible to reach the island. Carconte, however, had made his position plain to him.

G RIMLY, the human robot walked to the edge of the lake and removed his space-suit. Carefully, he measured the distance with his eye, knowing he must clear two hundred feet of consuming liquid which would dissolve his metal limbs as well as his flesh and blood torso. He turned to Carconte with a last appeal.

"I am heavier than any of you, because my arms and legs are of metal. I may not make it so easily."

"Jump!" hissed Carconte, tightening his grip on the pistol in its holster. "If you make it, then we are sure of jumping it easily!"

Hulan's pale face became tense and even whiter. He felt both fear and anger. It had not been his previous lot to be ordered around by lesser intelligences than his own. True, he had been hunted, but his success in eluding capture had soothed his vanity rather than arousing anything akin to ire other than contempt. Taking a deep breath, he bent his metal legs in under him, taking a careful foothold and balance. In silence and expectancy, the pirates watched.

He sprang, his eyes full upon the tower in the center of the island. Gracefully, his arms and legs in a straight line with his body, he soared above the deadly liquid. His eyes darted from the surface of the lake several feet below him to the island. He was halfway across and had not yet commenced to drop. The few seconds became dragged-out eternities of dread. He neared the island. He felt himself slowly dropping toward the lake. A thrill of confidence seized him, however, for he knew he was going to make it. He was headed straight for the tower which loomed broad and massive above him. He had overemphasized the dangers in his mind, but that was the inevitable carefulness of detail of the scientific mind. He reached the island, and a giant hand seemed to reach up invisible fingers to pull him down roughly and forcibly in contrast to his easy, soaring flight. He landed at the foot of the tower against which he rolled with a crash of his metal arms. He stood up and looked back across.

At that particular moment, Nez Hulan would have enjoyed seeing them all drop short into the lake, their dying shrieks sweet music to his ears. His lip curled as he saw Carconte urge one of his men to try the leap next. They were all divesting themselves of the space-suits, now. The pirate reluctantly followed the example of Hulan and landed to one side of the tower, bruised, white of features, but thankful. Several more leaped safely across before Carconte came. He evidenced the least fear of any, for it could not be said of the pirate leader

that he lacked nerve. He merely held the lives of his men cheaper than he did his own.

CHAPTER IV

THE TREASURE CHAMBER!

OTHERS followed Carconte until but two were left. Then happened that which justified all their fears. Of the remaining two, one of them missed the island. He leaped far but not straight. In fact, he nearly made the other shore. Too overcome with horror to loose the scream of terror which struggled to his throat for utterance, he skimmed into the pond and made several convulsive efforts to swim. His face mirrored the ghastly recognition of his doom, and, as he sank, pain-maddened eyes glared insanelly from their sockets. There were no ripples. The pirates watched with sensations of sickness at the pits of their stomachs. Only Hulan remained unmoved, more because it was his soulless nature than from any vindictive motive.

Only one pirate had not made the leap. All eyes turned to him. Carconte called advice to him nervously.

"Jump, Ilbrun, only jump straight or you, too, will dissolve your bones in this accursed lake. You can see how easy it is to get across. Only be careful and aim straight."

Sweat had broken out on Ilbrun's face. He hesitated at the edge of the fateful lake and then made the leap. He landed safely with a shuddering sob which seemed unlike these fierce, careless freebooters. But something about the insidious menace of the lake and the horrible manner in which their companion had died in it had shaken them, especially Ilbrun who had found it necessary to take the leap immediately afterward. Mischievously, Hulan dropped a bitter note of pessimism which earned him another dark look from Carconte.

"We may have to return this way."

Carconte cursed him, urging them to the

base of the tower. He found what he looked for, as suddenly a square portion in the blank surface of the tower fell inward slowly, allowing him to step inside. The others followed at his gesture, drawing their atom pistols in silence.

The tower was inwardly spiralled with steps which led from level to level, each chamber outfitted rakishly and in confusing disorder with the booty of plundered spaceships and colonies. As Carconte had predicted, they found the tower untenanted, yet they climbed silently, ever on the alert. They climbed above the great pillar and into the subterranean chambers overhead. Carconte took them along a dark corridor before they once more descended. Not a soul had they seen. Hulan felt a bit uneasy. It all seemed too easy, too unnatural. At the end of a long flight of steps, they found the treasure chamber as Carconte had promised. Blue-green bars of metal glistened in stacks nearly as high as their heads. The stacks were broad, and there were many of them. Phrensac specialized in seizing this kind of metal.

As they contemplated the wealth before them, a sniper from above shot the man standing beside Nez Hulan. Sensing the trap, they rushed back up the stairs. Three of Phrensac's men confronted them. Carconte's gun spat blue death, and one of the Pallasian pirates fell before the others, shrieking curses of alarm, fled before them. One of the fleeing pirates was shot down in the very act of drawing his weapon from its holster. He who escaped howled for aid. Yelling voices and tramping feet promised the invaders a warm time of it. The battle was swift and terrible. Carconte's men took the advantage with a rapid fusillade of silent, blue flashes from their atom pistols before the two groups met in hand to hand combat.

HULAN'S crushing, mechanical strength stood him in good stead. Parrying a vicious attempt to pistol him, he seized his

adversary in a strong grasp which slowly crushed the life from the pirate while he madly rained ineffectual blows upon the human robot's aluminum skull. Kicking the Pallasians right and left, he choked another one to death with metal fingers. Getting the worst of the close fighting, the remainder of Phrensac's men scattered to positions where they might snipe at the invaders and kill them without sacrifice to themselves. Both sides had lost several men. Then came reinforcements from above. The bitter, raucous voice of Phrensac himself could be heard above the din. Carconte's men were forced back down the stairs, firing as they went, and into the treasure chamber.

"We're trapped!" rasped Hulan, turning a malign face at Carconte. "You and your fool schemes!"

"Your nerve's weak!" spat Carconte contemptuously. "Just like I thought it might be!"

"But I am no fool!" replied Hulan stinging.

The supercilious sneer of the human robot, more than the words, drove Carconte to lift his pistol, but he did not fire. "I may need you," he said, nodding grimly. "This is no time for squabbles."

Carconte tried to contact Zind and found that the communicator, for some mysterious reason, did not function. It had gone dead, except for a strange hum. A voice came to them apparently from somewhere in the treasure room itself. It was Phrensac speaking.

"I can see you down there, Carconte, and I can hear you. I've put your communicator out of commission, so you can't talk with Zind and have him attack from the outside. We'll take care of him later. My hidden apparatus down there will work until it is burned away." A raucous laugh punctuated the pirate's words. "I am going to stand here, like I am now, and watch you and your men die very slowly, watching you cling as long as you can to what little life you have left in you. The lake you saw,

Carconte, is made of a remarkable substance. It destroys everything it touches—even metals—except mazinite. Do you get me yet, Carconte? Mazinite, as you know, is a rare and valuable metal." Phrensac laughed heartily again. "We are going to drain the lake, my dear Carconte, into your treasure room, that is, lower the lake level until the room is filled to the ceiling. Of course, the liquid has no effect on the rock. It is my protection for the treasure in case of emergency, you see. I have a pumping system, too, for pumping the chamber dry. You will be gone when we pump out the room, but the treasure will still be there. The pumps, of course, are lined with mazinite, or they would disintegrate like you will soon do."

DURING the recital, Carconte had undergone a visible change. His anger was all gone, and he was plainly terrified, knowing his helplessness and doom. His manner became beseeching.

"Phrensac! We were friends, once! We'd still be friends if you had done right by me! But let bygones be bygones! Let us out, and I promise you we'll not bother you again!"

"Of course you'll not bother us again," Phrensac agreed merrily. "No one has who ever fell into that lake."

"We shall pay you well, too!" offered Carconte hastily. "Think of that!"

"I want nothing but to see you die!" hissed Phrensac. "We are going to open the flood gates very slowly." He said something aside to someone before addressing them again. "You have several choices," he offered. "You can die very quickly or very slowly, as you will. Lay down and let yourself be at once covered, or die by inches. If you don't like either way, why run up the stairs. Of course, my men are waiting for you there to shoot you down, but it may be preferable, especially if the bottoms of your feet have been warmed a bit, and you do not care to live a little

while longer."

Luddock loosed a nervous cry and pointed to a bubbling pool of blue-green liquid which spread out upon the floor from the wall. Like frightened rats, they fled from it, watching it surge slowly over the floor towards them. Uttering a vengeful cry, Nez Hulan leaped atop a stack of mazinite bars. The others hastily followed his example. As if to spur them, a sudden rush of the deadly liquid was released and caught the lagging steps of Ablekirk who shrieked first in mortal terror and then in genuine pain as he felt his feet and ankles splashed. He clawed frantically to gain the top of a stack of metal bars. The stack was poorly piled, and Ablekirk's mad clambering brought the topmost bars clattering down about him, sending him splashing into the liquid contents of the dreaded lake. Blue death from Carconte's gun cut short his agonized screams, and only Phrensac's horrid laughter broke the stillness.

Meanwhile, the corrosive liquid rose slowly in perceptible creeps. Phrensac was drawing out the enjoyment of the spectacle to the utmost.

"You might better shoot all of them, Carconte—then shoot yourself," was his advice. "I wondered how soon you would climb the piles of metal."

As the liquid rose higher, Phrensac continued his jibes. The pirates in the treasure chamber were safely above the creeping destruction for the time being, yet the slow, steady rise presaged the inevitable end, and the doomed men watched the gradual, declining difference between their sanctuary and the rising death, wondering how long it would take to reach them.

CHAPTER V

NEZ HULAN'S PLAN

YOU have the treasure," said Phrensac cheerfully. "Where would you be without it? Treasure, indeed!"

Again Phrensac's evil laughter rang oddly through the flooded chamber. The pirates, watching the rising liquid, were silent and tense, their staring eyes and tight jaws significant of their agitation. Hulan's malign features were a shade whiter and more grim. Strange thoughts worked behind the aluminum cranium as he sat cross-legged on metal limbs, watching the doom which was as surely his as the rest.

"Listen!" Terseg hissed.

They heard Phrensac's voice speaking to someone close by him in an aside. His speech was indistinct and spasmodic.

"—action of the ——— on parts ——— the ——— scopic ——— eating you ——— destroying contacts—only see part of them ——— still sitting on ——— no escape for ———"

Phrensac's voice died out altogether. It was then that Hulan stirred himself to instant action.

"This liquid has destroyed all reception contacts in the treasure room! If we can't hear Phrensac, he can't hear or see us!"

"Build a bridge of this metal to the ramp!" breathed Carconte excitedly, as if he feared his voice might carry to the ears of Phrensac and his men. "They won't be looking for us on the stairs, now! They know we can't wade through this stuff! It's knee deep already!"

Suiting his actions to this plan, Carconte threw a bar of mazinite splashing into the liquid. The others, with the exception of the human robot, followed his example.

"Wait!" rasped Hulan, his eyes agleam with sudden inspiration. "I can wade and carry the rest of you to the stairs one at a time! We may be able to fight our way through to the pillar!"

"Those metal legs would become corroded and unmanageable," argued Carconte, still heaving bars of mazinite out into the flooded room.

"Not if we plated them with mazinite."

Carconte stopped midway of casting an-

other bar, seized by the inspiration of the human robot.

"But how would you? We have no laboratory for such business."

"No, but we have atom pistols which are sufficient to melt and fuse the metal to my legs. Quick! Let us set to work before the flood rises too high!"

LUDDOCK and Vrome crawled from nearby stacks of metal to Hulan who quickly ripped away his lower clothing, showing a marvelous pair of mechanical limbs. Seizing bars of metal, all three of them held their atom pistols close to where the bars touched his metal legs. The bright, intermittent blue flashes melted the mazinite and fused it in dull blue and silver against the human robot's mechanical legs. A quick leap by Reescra from an isolated stack of metal brought him safely beside the others, and he set to work plating a metal foot. Carconte and Terseg were too far away to reach Hulan safely, and to them the human robot rasped a warning.

"Watch the direction of the stairs and shoot anyone who comes down it. It is unlikely that they even maintain a watch at the top, now, for they consider us doomed men."

Hope had returned to Carconte, and he bade them work fast and expertly. The work went rapidly, Hulan urging them to coat his legs far above the knees and miss no spots. The liquid in the chamber had meanwhile risen slowly. When double plating had been applied to his feet against the possibilities of scraping, chipping and other wear, he announced his satisfaction. Without further ceremony, he let his legs slip down into the corrosive liquid. The mazinite plating extended nearly to his hips, several inches above the danger level.

Seizing Luddock, he carried the pirate quickly, yet carefully, across the broad chamber and left him on the stairs where he stood with tilted pistol, looking upward.

Returning, Nez Hulan next picked up Reescra. Again he traversed the flooded chamber. He was nearly to the doorway and the stairs when he stumbled over one of the hidden bars of mazinite. Reescra, realizing their danger, especially his own, clutched the human robot desperately and yelled involuntarily in terror at the prospects of being dropped into the liquid hell. Hulan staggered frantically to recover himself, but only by hurling Reescra in the direction of the stairs where the pirate landed high and dry except for one arm he threw out to steady himself, did he remain upright. Reescra's arm submerged to the elbow. Luddock was beside him to jerk him clear and clap a hand over his mouth to shut off the yells of pain struggling to free themselves from his throat. Hulan recovered his balance with uncertain steps and leaned panting against a wall near the doorway.

"Damn your bridge!" he hissed, his malevolent eyes glaring at Carconte. "It nearly finished our chances!"

"Watch your step!" warned the ruffled pirate leader. "You know I threw those bars there!"

Hulan argued no further but quickly transported the remaining pirates one at a time to the stairs. Reescra groaned in pain as one arm, from the elbow down, changed color. As they crept cautiously up the stairs, Carconte hissing threats upon the luckless pirate to cease his lamentations, Reescra's arm shredded away in small pieces, leaving only the blackened, waving stump of his elbow. No guard had been left at the top of the stairs, and silently they ascended higher, hearing voices and footsteps as they reached the level above the tower on the island. They blundered upon two running pirates who saw them in time and escaped the blue shafts of death loosed at them. The alarm was given, and they quickened their pace, discarding caution for speed. Carconte want-

ed to get back to the space-ship and make a raid on the front entrance, confident now that Phrensac's weakened forces could not hold out against them. They quickly descended the spiral staircase of the tower from chamber to chamber. Far above them could be heard the sounds of pursuit. At the base of the great stone pillar, Carconte jerked open the panel and they were through the opening and on the little island.

"Leap across, Luddock!" he panted. "Keep our retreat covered from over across! Follow him, the rest of you!"

The pirates made the long leap across the lake of consuming liquid. The decrease in the level was slight, for the treasure chamber had been less than one-third filled when they left it. Meanwhile, Carconte and those left on the island turned to defend themselves from the Pallasian pirates who came tumbling down into the base level.

A blue flash came from far up the outside of the tower and Vlome fell dead. Across the lake, Luddock loosed a series of shots at a leaning figure in a small opening high in the tower. The man slumped forward, arms downward across the sill. Several of Phrensac's men leaped out of the base level, guns blazing wildly. Only Luddock and Terseg had reached the other shore. The rest of Carconte's force came to grips with their Pallasian enemies before many shots had been exchanged.

A LUCKLESS pirate who charged at Hulan had the life squeezed out of him, another his jaw broken by a metal fist before being picked up and thrown into the lake. Rolling close to the edge of the island, Reescra and another grappled madly striving to gain a substantial hold and plunge the other into the liquid hell. Reescra, hampered by the uselessness of one arm, was overcome and rolled into the lake where his struggles were brief. His

conqueror survived no longer than the time it took Terseg to aim his pistol from across the lake.

Phrensac and Carconte were at grips together, settling their personal differences. Hulan kicked a gunhand of the remaining pirate and closed with him, knocking and mauling him into insensibility. The lake claimed another unconscious victim. He turned to help Carconte but was repulsed by the pirate leader.

"Leave him—to—me! Watch—the doorway—and shoot!"

Hulan held a pistol ready, but no more of the pirates ventured down out of the tower. The human robot doubted if the massacre had left any. Carconte and Phrensac battled viciously, the latter trying hard to reach his pistol. Carconte, although the opportunity twice presented itself, did not seize the weapon, feeling secure in the knowledge of his greater strength. With quick glances, and a hard smile on his pale countenance, Hulan divined Carconte's design. The moon pirate's strength slowly overcame Phrensac, and the struggling Pallasian was picked up by Carconte and carried to the lake's edge. Hate and terror stamped their mark vividly on Phrensac's face. Carconte lowered his struggling enemy until his feet were immersed in the hellish combinations of acids he had so artfully blended. Phrensac shrieked his maddened agony in scarcely recognizable curses. With a grin of satisfaction, Carconte slowly lowered his arch-enemy to the death which the Pallasian pirate leader had meant for him. Only when Phrensac's senses left him in a shuddering gasp did Carconte release him and let the rest of his body sink out of sight. With eyes blazing triumphantly, and panting like an apocalypse beast, Carconte turned to the human robot who stood there unmoved and cold.

"He—he went too soon! It should have

taken longer—like he meant us to go!"

"We've just about cleaned them up," said Hulan. "The treasure, all of it, is ours now."

A buzzing in Carconte's communicator called his attention to Zind. Phrensac's neutralizing agency had become impotent.

"Carconte—a ship of the Interplanetary Guard is on its way here—and that damned girl you took off the *Andronicus* has escaped the ship in a space-suit! She got loose here somehow and blabbed out a broadcast to the nearest I. G. ship she could contact!"

"Where's she now?" bellowed Carconte.

"Hidden in the crags somewhere—like a needle in a haystack on this damned little world! You'd better hurry! We're cruising around the pit you entered!"

Hulan and Carconte leaped across and joined Terseg and Luddock.

"I told you women were bad for us!" Hulan reminded his superior. "The I. G. is coming! We can't stay and take the treasure after losing all the men we did! We'll be lucky to escape with our lives!"

Carconte made no answer as they quickly donned space-suits and hurried up the tunnel, climbing the rough face of the long drop they had made. Zind was not far away with the ship ready to pick them up.

"We've got to get out of here fast!" exclaimed Zind nervously. "That I. G. ship is on our detectors already, it's that close! You've lost the girl! You'll never find her! She's waiting for the I. G. ship to pick her up!"

"Good riddance!" rasped Hulan.

"It's back to the moon, Zind," Carconte ordered. "I settled my score with Phrensac, but we got none of the treasure."

"Only that which I carried away," clicked Hulan, waving a metal arm to designate his plated, mechanical legs. "It seems that I am the only souvenir of your trip."

*Sober drivers
turned suddenly
into maniacs!*



LAUGHTER OUT OF SPACE

by DENNIS CLIVE

CHAPTER I

THE LAUGHING PLAGUE!

SENATOR JOE KILBURN'S election campaign was nothing if not startling.

It had all the dynamic earmarks of the political genius of 1970—but when he staged a complete train smash, with each train full of people, thereby precipitating some two hundred deaths and injuries, matters were decidedly beyond a joke...

A m a z i n g l y enough, Senator Kilburn was not in the least disturbed at what he

had done. He only laughed—and laughed—and laughed... until they had to take him away—quietly.

Naturally, his opponent won the election hands down. The American people forgot the strange villainy of Kilburn in a sudden new problem. What had possessed a certain famous European diplomat to tear off all his clothes in the Chamber of Deputies and declare that he was a nudist? What, too, had prompted him to yell with amusement at his indelicate act? Why, particularly, had he dropped dead in the middle of his laughter...? Strange. Strange indeed!

And, from unexpected quarters of the world, there came hints of a strange type of insanity. In practically every land, men and women, here and there, were suddenly smitten with the weirdest desires and ideas, ranging from pure foolishness to downright cruelty. For no apparent reason natures suddenly changed—but they all had one

thing in common—laughter!—raging, hysterical laughter that ultimated in sudden death...

The psychoanalysts went to work looking for hereditary causes; but so thick and fast did the cases become, there was not time to investigate any individual one to the depths before death took place. Besides, in many cases the psychoanalysts themselves

were overcome. There was the case of Sir Walton Hagoforth, the British psychologist, who stood in the middle of the Strand swallowing lumps of lighted paper

under the impression that he was a fire-eater. He, too, died... laughing.

A sense of alarm began to settle on people. The cases of delusion and death were becoming so numerous and widespread that none knew when he or she might suddenly be overcome. There was, too, the serious side of the business—the problem of public servants—the engine drivers, the airmen, the ships' captains, upon whom thousands depended for safety. If any of them were suddenly overpowered...

Many of them were, as the weeks went by. Men and women were dying in ones and twos, then in groups, then in dozens. And all of them died... laughing.

THE Laughing Plague had more than a curiosity value to the officials of Mount Wilson Annex, scientific headquarters of the United States—and to Conrad Smith, the chief, in particular.

Conrad Smith finds himself in an insane world of laughing madmen! Earth is dying from a horrible doom out of the void—and we guarantee you a smashing climax that will leave you breathless with its powerful realism!

To Con Smith, six foot four of bones poured into indifferent tweeds, the mystery of humanity's change meant scientific exploration. It was not so much a riddle for psycho-analysts and physicians as for men who probed the depthless mysteries of space.

To the end of solving the problem, Con spent every night in the Annex Observatory, brooding over the mirror of the 500-inch reflector, debating the mystery of why the stars to the north of the heavens were bluish and purple. The spectroscope indicated nitrogen, but that didn't mean a thing—possibly an increase in the nitrogen content of Earth's atmosphere. But since nitrogen didn't mix with anything, where was the connection between that and a few crazy people? Of course, the nitrogen—if such it was—might be *beyond* Earth. But even then it did not make sense. . . . So Con Smith sat at his desk like a half-closed penknife, pondering, his prematurely gray hair clutched in his bony hands.

Some of the Annex staff thought he was crazy, but because he was the chief, in spite of the comparative immaturity of thirty-five years, they did not put their thoughts into words, but instead did not bother. Even so, he couldn't figure out anything.

For several weeks, as the number of victims to the Laughing Plague went up, he still found nothing. Now and again he would stalk like a bony wraith up and down the endless enameled corridors of the Annex, studying the reports of various departments with his roving, colorless gray eyes. He sucked his big teeth over the information he received, hurled the papers back to their owners. Nothing stung Con Smith more than useless news. . . . The stars were blue to the north. So what?

He was inwardly worried, too. His admirably balanced mind was keen enough to see that the mounting number of victims of the Plague would finally undermine civilization itself, and as a scientist—chief scientist at that, though astronomy was his

main line—it was a sacred duty for him to solve the mystery. So he told his wife Marjorie all about it, because he had more faith in her than all the men with degrees ever born.

"Anyway, it isn't a disease," he said pacing the snug study of their Los Angeles home. He had come home early this time to catch up on some much-needed sleep "If it isn't a disease, what is it? Answer that one!" He twirled around with lean finger pointed at the dark, slim girl coiled in the armchair.

She ignored his almost prosecuting-counsel manner.

"There have always been lunatics," she said quietly, "you know, people who think they're Napoleon, or the Statue of Liberty. Coming nearer home, what about Doc Bradley, former chief of the Annex? He was a lunatic if ever there was one; the world laughed its sides sore. Remember?"

"Yeah. . . ." Con's pale eyes narrowed in reflection. Doc Bradley had been crazy, at that. In spite of an endless chorus of derision from scientists and public alike, he had hurled himself into space in a crackpot rocket four years before. Spouted something about a new explosive. . . . Naturally he had never been seen or heard of again, and certainly no detonator flash, the pre-arranged signal, had announced his landing on the moon. The 500-inch reflector would easily have detected it.

Pity about Bradley . . . great scientist, but just a little cracked.

"What *causes* madness?" Marjorie asked suddenly, brooding.

"Huh?" Con started out of his reverie. "Oh . . . derangement of brain cells, usually, or actual disease of the brain. But this isn't disease. It's something else. . . . Don't forget that hellish laughter that follows. Then . . . death!"

He paced around again, stopped with his knuckles pressed in taut whiteness on the desk-top. "If only I knew why the stars to the north are blue . . ." he muttered. "If

only I knew! Can only be nitrogen, and that doesn't mean a thing. I mean, spectrum analyses don't lie, do they?"

"Not if *you* make 'em," Marjorie said, admiringly.

"Hmmm . . ." Con gave a ghostly smile; he never got further than that. Finally, with his usual watertight mind system, he said, "Coming back home, how's Doris?"

"Oh, not so bad. Saw her this morning. Expecting the baby any time. . . ."

CON gave a grunt. Babies were not up his street. Besides, though he loved Marjorie deeply, he was not impressed with her sister Doris. Her husband, Clifford Graham, wasn't so bad—bit of a wag, in his own estimation, anyhow.

Marjorie gave a sigh. "Not much of a world for any poor kid to be born into," she said slowly. "There could be so—"

She broke off suddenly, uncoiled herself out of the chair and straightened up. Her face had gone deathly white.

"What's the matter?" Con demanded, catapulting to her side. The moment he got near to her he saw perspiration gleaming on her forehead.

"Matter?" she repeated, and looked at him with big staring dark eyes. "Why, nothing! Only I—" She stopped in mid-sentence and abruptly started to laugh. It increased peal upon peal into high falsetto! Her slim body began to shake with the violence of her hysterical efforts!

"Marj!" Con snapped. "*Marj!*" He clutched her shoulders and shook her until her chestnut hair tumbled over her drawn, grinning face. "Stop it, you damned little idiot! Stop it—"

But she only laughed the more.

"*Shut up!*" he commanded brutally, and struck her a resounding blow in the face with the back of his hand.

Her laughter stopped dead. All of a sudden the room was horribly quiet. . . . She sat looking at him like a woman awakened from the dead. Then without the slightest

sound, she slipped out of her chair and collapsed her length on the carpet.

Instantly Con gathered her up into his arms, stared at her curiously bluish pallor. Scientific interest and desperate alarm fought for the mastery of his emotions. At last, right on his own doorstep, the Plague had struck!

Even as he stared, pondering, he felt himself undergoing curious sensations of faintness. His heart raced; the furniture seemed to go far away and come back again; remote roarings boomed through his ears. A half-formed desire to laugh twitched his face muscles.

With a sudden tremendous effort at control, he hauled his wife up, staggered with her across the room, then up the stairs. The air cleared suddenly; he arose out of the miasma, keen and alert again. Once he was satisfied that Marjorie was recovering her senses, he left her and pelted back downstairs, raced through to the little laboratory adjoining the back kitchen, and came back into the study with an air ampule clutched in his hand.

He waited until the wafting sensations of dizziness began to creep around him again, then he sucked a sample of the vitiation into the ampule, corked it, and went back to the laboratory. But before he could make attempts at analysis, there came a plaintive call from upstairs. Immediately, he turned and went into the hall.

Marjorie was at the top of the stairs, swaying giddily, her face as white as a sheet. One hand was clutching at her heart.

"Con," she said slowly, "I think—think I'm going to—to die. . . ." She laughed a little at that. It went upwards into a wild scream of panic merriment; then to the paralyzed Con's horror, he saw her knees buckle under her and she came crashing down the stairs headfirst, landing in a sprawling heap in his automatically out-thrust arms.

"Marj . . ." he whispered, ashy-faced,

shaking her. Then he screamed it out. "Marjorie! Oh, God. . ."

His hand flew to her heart, froze there as he failed to detect any sign of beating. Fascinated, he stared into the bloodless face and glazing eyes. Merciless truth slammed into his aching brain.

Marjorie was dead.

CHAPTER II

STRANGE BIRTHMARKS!

FOR two weeks nobody could find Con Smith. Nearly everybody knew of his wife's sudden death following Plague hysteria; they knew, too, that Con had been at the funeral, morose and silent—but where he went after that was a mystery. Truth to tell, he had done something foreign to his coldly precise nature—had indeed drunk himself into a stupor in a vain endeavor to drown his grief. . . .

Then, little by little, the smooth rhythm of his brain began to reassert itself. Scientific curiosity replaced some of the barren emptiness in his heart. He remembered the ampule of air he had left sealed on that tragic evening.

Suddenly he returned to Mount Wilson Annex, more bloodless than ever, a gaunt, resolute phantom of a man. The first person he met during the morning of his return was Nat Chambers, the rotund little psychiatrist of the organization. He came into Con's laboratory with a baffled expression on his red, schoolboyish face.

"Anything fresh?" he asked quietly.

"Mebbe. . ." Con retorted, tight-lipped. He was poised like a vulture over his ampule and instruments. For a long time, he busied himself, then straightened up and took a deep breath. He made a brief motion.

"Take a look. . ."

The scientist came forward, studied the instruments carefully. Then he looked up in surprise.

"Some new sort of gas!" he exclaimed. "Looks like nitrogen to me, only—"

"Only it isn't!" Con snapped. "Therein lies a world of difference. . . . That's a sample of the air that has affected people with lunacy and hysteria, that killed my wife." His face set like granite. "Didn't kill me," he said, relaxing. "I'm as tough as shoe leather. Marj wasn't. . ."

"But—but what is it? How'd it get into our atmosphere?"

For answer Con picked up a spectrograph color plate and tapped it significantly.

"Spectrum of Venus," he commented. "You notice that down here at the violet end there are distinct traces of purple-blue banding? That represents a proportion of Venusian atmosphere in the upper levels of that planet's air—a proportion that has always baffled astronomers. It isn't exactly nitrogen, but something very near to it. Anyway, we haven't anything like it in our chemical knowledge."

"Uh-huh," Chambers acknowledged slowly, eyeing the plate.

"And here," Con went on, "is a spectrum analysis of the gas in the ampule. . . ."

"Identical!" Chambers cried, dumfounded.

"Exactly. . ."

The physicist was silent for a long time, stroking his round chin. At last he glanced up with his bright blue eyes.

"Little doubt of the fact that this alien gas has its counterpart on Venus—but how the Sam Hill did it escape from Venus and come here? It just couldn't happen. Against all scientific law!"

Con mused, spoke slowly. "I don't pretend to know *how* it happened, how it escaped from Venus. But it is pretty clear that the earth in its spacial journey has run into a mass of the stuff. It differs from nitrogen in that it combines readily with oxygen. Little by little our atmosphere is getting impregnated. Whiffs of the stuff are touching down to the surface and pro-

duce results on human bodies which range from lunacy to hysteria—but always death follows . . . death with laughter. It's damnable!"

"Yes," Chambers admitted quietly. "Well, what now? Now that we've got to the root of the mystery, what comes next?"

"We *haven't* got to the root, and that's what worries me! We know it is an unknown gas producing fatal effects, but why did it happen? Why is it identical to a gas existing in the atmosphere of Venus? That's the real riddle—"

"Maybe, but that won't interest the public. Our job is to advise the Government of our findings, then try and find a way of stopping the trouble."

"Only thing we can do is try and devise a mask that will resist the gas," Con mused. "We'll get every chemist in America on the job right away . . . in the world, in fact. Once we have the right formula, they can be manufactured by the million. Every man, woman and child must have one. . . . This is emergency."

IT SEEMED curious, but no sooner had the S.O.S. gone out from Mount Wilson Annex to the scientists of the world than the pollution of the atmosphere increased suddenly by nearly a hundred-fold! The stuff was even visible next day in the highest reaches of the atmosphere. The sun hung through a smoky violet haze. Suddenly Mankind was forced to the realization that danger was poised right over its head.

Strange indeed were the effects of the gas as it seeped down in places to earth's surface. Eastern America caught it far worse than the west. Radio messages that might have been broadcast from a lunatic asylum stabbed through the ether for all the world to hear. . . .

There was the case of the twenty dock workers in New York who had died of hysteria in the same way as Marjorie Smith. There were no fewer than two hundred auto

smashes as sober drivers turned suddenly into maniacs and deliberately drove into each other, or else rammed their cars into shop windows with disastrous results.

Under the impression that he was driving an airplane, the driver of the Overland Limited wrecked his train and killed six hundred people. He died after making the admission, died screaming with merriment.

On the less serious side was the case of Lawton Casterly, the famous art critic. He was discovered walking down Broadway clad only in a pair of shorts and holding up an open umbrella. Upon arrest he declared he was out to reform the laws relating to pepper. In an hour he was dead, laughing at his own joke.

No sooner had he died than the harassed police had the call to go to Times Square. There they found a traffic holdup caused by Madeline Beucourt, the ash-blond actress. Clad in an artist's smock and slacks, they found her standing on her head in the middle of the Square, with an inverted easel and canvas before her. Questioned, she averred she was a surrealist getting new angles on life. . . . Ten minutes after the police had turned her right side up and led her off, she threw herself under a car, laughed deliriously as she died, horribly. . . .

So it went on. One after another, sometimes in batches, throughout the first day of the gas's deepening influence, came reports of incredible happenings—and not only from America. Parts of England were affected, half of Russia, some parts of France and Germany. With terrifying swiftness, sanely balanced people were developed into utter lunatics, then dying. . . .

In their laboratories, the scientists worked feverishly, devising ways and means to defeat the gas of which they now had all too many samples. No man knew exactly what it was—but one fact was grimly obvious, to Con Smith in particular. There was no type of mask that was perfect insulation against the stuff!

FOR endless hours, he and the rest of the Annex technicians, as apart from the other chemists of the world, had worked on countless samples of synthetic and pure materials—rubbers, fabrics, metal meshes, glass, composites, compounds; but the fact remained that nothing was at once strong enough and light enough to make a helmet and give insulation against the gas. Its molecular build-up was such that it seeped through. Only one thing would block it—lead, and lead for a helmet was out of the question.

It had taken two days and nights to arrive at this conclusion, then with the consent of the other scientists, Con gave it out rather reluctantly to the anxiously waiting governments. Helmets were useless for the masses; the alternative lay in sheathing buildings with lead and rendering them airtight until the gas had passed, providing all the usual means for ridding the air of carbon dioxide and other toxics.

Deeping tragedy stalking the world lent a spur to the governments. Red tape was ruthlessly slashed, labor conscripted for the task of manning every known lead mine. Armies of men and women set to work on utilizing the lead as fast as it was turned out from the factory moulds. They set to work to provide the great public buildings against the ravages of the approaching blue fog.

The scientists could do no more, only watch events. Con Smith remained at his post, a silent, embittered man. He had nothing to live for, anyway, now that his wife was dead. To him it did not represent a risk to sit in the Annex by day and night when at any moment the gas might seep down to the mountain heights and catch up with him. Suppose he did die? What of it? And if he did not, he might find a reason for this madness and disaster . . . He knew now why the northward stars had been blue. It had been the gas field. . . . But why *Venusian* gas?

That was the mystery that still ham-

pered in his brain. How had such a vast area of gas escaped from Venus, anyway? Hour after hour he sat brooding over the problem, to have to admit himself beaten in the end.

At night he spent much of his time peering at the stars through the giant reflector. But they were blue in all directions, now. Earth was fairly and squarely in the midst of the fog. And therein too lay another singular problem. Since Earth was whirling through space at 18 miles a second, the gas cloud must be countless millions of cubic feet in area to have lasted so long—far more gas in fact than could ever have been encompassed in Venus' atmosphere anyway!

Puzzle . . . absolute.

Irritated, forgotten pipe between his teeth, Con snapped on the radio at last and sat listening to the world reports still coming in. New York swept by mass hysteria! London panicking! No sounds from Berlin! Stratosphere planes crashing wholesale! Transatlantic liner *Albatross* lost with all hands! Asylums full! Business sliding downhill! Doom—doom—doom! Except for the gallant men and women battling the incessant threat of death in order to make refuges from the onslaught. And in many ways, the reports said, fortune had so far favored them. One woman and three men had succumbed in raving madness at a whiff from the empurpled heights above. . . .

Wearied, too tired to think straight anymore, Con switched off at last and pulled on his hat and coat, went to his now lonely home in moody thought, hardly giving a glance at the violet stars as he tramped the mountain road towards the city. His whole brain was aching to find explanations, striving to find some way of stopping the rot, the inevitable destruction of humanity he saw ahead.

He pondered the possibilities of other gases as an antidote; but in that he came up against the evident factor that he might

experiment with millions of gases before he found the correct reagent to reduce the poison gas to harmlessness. Besides, there wasn't time.

HE had hardly entered his home and sat down to a lonely meal in the cold, empty kitchen before the telephone bell rang. Sandwich in hand, he went into the hall and took up the receiver.

"Hello? Con Smith speaking."

"Oh, howdy Con!" He recognized the genial voice of Clifford Graham, his brother-in-law. "Say, I'm glad I caught you in. I guess you're pretty lonely all by yourself, eh?"

"What do you think?" Con munched between words.

"Well, that's what I thought, and that's why I figured you can't have much to do at home now that Marjorie's dead." Cliff could be brutally tactless at times. "Why don't you come over to our place tonight? We're having a bit of supper and celebration. The baby was born two days ago, you know."

"Baby?" Con frowned; then out of the haze of his mind a light dawned. "Oh, yeah, the baby! Marjorie mentioned it. . . . Well—congratulations!"

"Oh, come over, can't you? Cheer you up a bit! So many things can happen to any of us at any time—have to defeat it by being cheerful, you know. Might be dead tomorrow. *Come on!*"

Con shrugged to himself. "O. K., Cliff. What have I got to lose, anyway? Be there soon."

He hung up and finished his sandwich, shaved and tidied up, then set off. The Graham home, a modest residential place, was only half a mile distant. Cliff Graham met him in the cheery hall—a big, rotund fellow of thirty-four, whom not even death vapors and crumbling business could depress.

"Naturally the wife's upstairs," he said, leading the way into the drawing room.

"But that doesn't stop the rest of us from celebrating. 'Sides, Doris can hear us upstairs and it sort of cheers her, see?"

Con nodded slowly, glanced around the room at the men and women relations and friends as he was introduced to them en masse. They smiled back at him, rather drawnly, he thought. Spontaneity of pleasure had gone these days under the eternally hanging threat of lunacy and death. Only irrepressible men like Cliff Graham could go on as if nothing had happened.

Con went over to a chair and folded up in his usual way. He tried to laugh at the jokes Cliff cracked, tried to extract some pleasure out of the champagne handed to him, tried to be civil to the old girl with a face like a deviled kidney who sat on his right, but somehow. . . . Well, his mind was wandering again to the mystery of the Venusian gas and how to destroy it. All this was so silly, so damnably empty, with the fate of humanity in the balance, perhaps even in his hands.

"To the baby!" Cliff kept saying, endlessly, raising his glass.

"To the baby. . . ." acknowledged the relations, and laughed and chattered under the fancied notion that it was all so enjoyable. They meant no harm to the baby, even less to the good-hearted Cliff and his absent wife—but right overhead in the sky was a purple cloud. And Con couldn't forget it.

He started suddenly out of meditation at a plucking at his sleeve. It was the old girl with the net-worked face.

"Strangest thing about the baby. . . ." she confided, with an artless smile, and her gray-rimmed brown eyes shone with the brightness of the champagne. "The *strangest* thing. . . . I really shouldn't tell. . . ."

CON looked interested and said "Damn the baby!" under his breath.

"I'm Auntie Minerva," she went on, crossing her black-stockinged ankles coyishly.

"I've seen the baby. I shouldn't tell of course, but— He has birthmarks!"

"Amazing!" Con said listlessly.

"Black ones!" Auntie embellished, and drained her glass.

"Huh? *Black* ones?" Con sat upright again, staring. "Say, that *is* something!"

"Eight little black spots on his back— No, no, that's wrong. Auntie closed an eye speculatively. "Nine! That's it! One in the center and eight little ones round it. . . . But it's a secret. The *strangest* thing. . . ."

"I'LL say!" Con murmured, and lay back again—then when Auntie got up and sought fresh fields to conquer, he lay pondering. Her slightly tipsy confession had arrested his thoughts. He sat staring in front of him, blind to Cliff's gesticulations, deaf to his asinine jokes, mentally separated from the chatter and smoke of the stuffy room. Nine birthmarks. Eight planets and a sun! Nine! Damn silly, of course, but—The problem on his mind was taking fantastic twists. But after all, *black* birthmarks . . . ?

Suddenly he got to his feet, mingled with the guests for a moment, then slid unnoticed out of the room and went quietly upstairs. His knock on the door of Doris' room brought forth a trim nurse, very starched and efficient—not a little surprised either at beholding the gaunt, roving-eyed scientist towering over her in the corridor.

"Con Smith's the name," he said briefly. "I want some information, nurse. . . ."

She closed the bedroom door quietly and came forward to the center of the corridor.

"Something I can do, Mr. Smith?" The chief of the Mount Wilson Annex was entitled to plenty of respect.

"Yeah. I've just heard that this baby of Cliff's has nine birthmarks on his back. That right?"

"Quite. Coal black ones."

"I suppose it wouldn't be possible for me to see them?"

"I'm afraid not." The nurse pondered a moment, then said brightly, "But I could draw you an exact copy."

"You could? That's fine!" Con tore a leaf out of his notebook. "O. K.—get busy."

The nurse went over to the landing table, pondering a moment or two, then set to work with her pencil. Con stood watching silently as she drew a rather large central black dot, then different sized ones at intervals in varying positions, finishing off with a rough outline of the baby's back and shoulders.

"Incredible!" Con breathed at last. "Nurse, did you ever see anything so absolutely like the scale drawings of our solar system? Eight planets, ignoring Pluto, and a central sun!"

The nurse looked up sharply. "But how odd, Mr. Smith! Doctor Grantham made that very same comment when he first saw them on the baby. In fact, he made the jest that perhaps he was going to follow your profession and become an astronomer. . . ."

Con smiled bleakly at the compliment, then he asked curtly, "Where is Doctor Grantham?"

"General Hospital, just around the block."

Con debated a brief moment, then folded up the sketch quickly. All the listlessness had gone out of his bearing now. His sunken eyes were suddenly glowing again. With a brusque word of thanks, he turned to the staircase and pelted down into the hall. He ran into Cliff as he emerged from the drawing-room.

"So there you are, Con! I just wanted to—"

"No time now, old man," Con broke in, scrambling into hat and coat. "Urgent call—see you later. And take good care of that kid of yours. Maybe he saved the world tonight. . . ."

"Huh?" Cliff was left staring uncertainly at the closed front door.

CHAPTER III

A WEIRD CODE!

IT did not take Con more than five minutes to reach the hospital, but once inside it, he found it packed to the doors with all manner of emergency cases, direct outcomes of the failing human element. In silence, he passed through the rows of waiting victims, moved into the deeper reaches of the hospital. Had he been a stranger, not the least attention would have been paid to him, but his card and obvious urgency finally secured the busy, harrassed Dr. Grantham in his private room.

Short, square-faced and blue-eyed, clad in his white smock, Grantham came in rather impatiently and shook hands.

"Exactly how urgent, Mr. Smith?" he asked, with remarkable economy of words.

"Urgent enough to perhaps save the human race!" Con replied, his pale eyes bright. "I want the facts concerning the birthmarks on that baby of the Grahams—the nine black ones."

"I haven't time for such things now, man! Out there is a whole string of people who—"

"They must wait!" Con snapped, jaws tightening. "In fact, I demand it. As the chief scientist of the Annex, I'm over you in authority, doctor—remember that. Now . . . I believe you noticed the resemblance in those birthmarks to a solar system drawing. Right?"

"Well, yes, but after all— Plain coincidence."

"If that be so, you'll have to admit another coincidence. Just when did a black birthmark happen before?"

"Never to my knowledge."

"So I thought. Then the combination of black birthmarks in a solar system formation is no coincidence. . . ."

Some of Grantham's impatience began to abate. He stroked his square jaw, looked at the sketch Con tugged from his pocket.

"This," Grantham said presently, "is not entirely accurate. There is a tiny long birthmark too—like this . . ." His pencil made a mark. Con stood staring at it. The sketch now had a mark against the second circular dot from the central big one.

"Venus!" he whispered in a tense voice. "Stress is definitely laid on the planet Venus!"

"I beg your pardon!" the doctor asked sharply.

"O. K., I haven't got delusions," Con said, with an apologetic smile. "Not yet, anyway. I guess all this seems queer to you, but then I'm an astronomer and just can't help linking up nine birthmarks with eight planets and a sun. This is certainly a solar system pattern, a coincidence we cannot admit—in *black* too, to arrest attention. Your addition has shown that Venus has something to do with it, and Venusian gas is responsible for the world Plague, you know."

"It is peculiar," Grantham admitted. "But what possible connection can you see—"

"Perhaps you can help me. Tell me, what causes birthmarks?"

"Nobody knows. They just happen—to anybody. Certainly they have no connection with an impression made on the mother before the child's birth. That is so much fallacy."

"There have never been black ones before?" Con insisted.

"In my knowledge, black ones are unique. There are the other types without end, of course—mole, port wine stain, and so on. We can sometimes get rid of them by ordinary methods; at other times we try ultraviolet radiations, injections of scelerosing solutions, or even freezing with solidified carbon dioxide. Then there are X-rays, radium, electrolysis, acid . . ."

"But black ones would defy all these things?"

"The ones on the Graham baby would,

unquestionably," the doctor nodded. "From what I studied of them on the baby's back, I'd say they were produced by some prenatal burning process, obviously not painful or the mother would have noticed it. I thought at first they were thickly convulsed blood vessels, but my tests showed otherwise. They're—well, simply patterned into the child's skin."

"HMMMM . . ." Con fell to thought, presently asked, "Have you no possible idea what *might* cause birthmarks?"

"None sound enough to bear publication," Grantham smiled. "Privately, I can only think that cosmic rays might cause them. They are unquestionably the basis of life and evolution—the cosmic rays, I mean. They can produce pigmentary changes without actual burning, and so . . . Well, cosmic rays are a different wavelength to those producing the etheric sensation of heat. Just an idea of my own, mind you. May be nothing in it."

"Cosmic rays," Con repeated slowly. "I just wonder . . ."

HE stood in thoughtful silence for a long moment, then looked up sharply.

"Well thanks, Doc, you've been a swell help. It's only a hunch I've got. I'll let you know how I make out. . . . See you again."

Grantham nodded quietly. He was trying to decide in his own mind if Con Smith was a new victim of lunacy. . . .

But Con Smith was not a lunatic. Certainly he was working on a preposterous hunch, but in the conditions assailing the world, nothing struck him as too preposterous or outlandish for at least one try. Scientists, driven desperate in their endeavors to find a solution to the lowering purple gas, listened to what Con had to say and then obeyed his orders with some dubiousness.

He issued an extraordinary request—that all recently born babies, alive or dead,

the world over, be examined for birthmarks, and if any were present, photostatic prints were to be made and sent or brought to him immediately. Naturally there was a lot of haggling over such an order, but because of his feverish belief in his own mysterious discovery, he was humored. A systematic search began in every country.

And it was a search that was a race against time.

In all parts of the world now the gas was wreaking havoc. Whole populations were being affected. With every day there was the story of growing tragedy, of collisions, death and injury, destruction and fires, of drowning and hysteria. Madness walked the earth, was only stopped in those places where lead had been fitted to houses and buildings to hold the curse at bay . . .

While he waited for the results of his baby search, Con was not idle. Flogging his lean, energetic form to even greater activity, he forced men and women into the building of lead protections for the Annex. His former disregard for whether he lived or died had gone now; he had to live to see if there really was a solution to the problem—not that he cared for his own life individually, only for the benefits he could perhaps bestow if he escaped death.

While the baby search went on, he moved in permanently to the safety of the Annex's lead-sheathed reaches, his scientific colleagues within call. Outside, further things went awry with the world. The radio carried news of the slow death of vegetation.

That came as a shock to Con and the scientists. All of them had been pretty sure that the chlorophyll of plants would break down the unknown quantity with chemical synthesis and continue to survive as of yore, but evidently the gas's nature was such that it could not be assimilated or changed. At any rate, crops began to blight and wither, whole orchards turned black, great areas of meadowland began to look as though fire or acid had swept over them. . . . It brought the inevitable problem

of failing food supply before the governments of every country.

A world peopled by starving lunatics?—that seemed the likely prospect.

And still the purple gas persisted, day in and day out, masking the sun under an amethyst haze, dimming the stars. Some cities had still escaped the full force of the hideousness. Los Angeles was one, New Orleans another. Pennsylvania, too, was hardly touched—but New York and points eastwards had become almost entirely enveloped. Thousands of the population were dead; others were deranged beyond recovery, which added to the difficulties of the heroic band of rescuers always arriving to lend assistance.

THROUGH days and nights, sleeping and eating at irregular intervals, Con waited for reports. He divided his time between the radio and the sealed windows, gazed out on murky dark blue vapors poised far overhead in the mountain fastnesses. Down in the streets of the cities he could imagine men and women braving death to find food. In the Annex, with instruments at their command, the scientists had no fear of starvation. And certainly they could not help the masses, who had already changed to a semi-Neolithic way of living. . . .

Then, at last, Con began to get results. Two of the men in charge of the baby search in America survived the gas. Eight of them had died in the struggle, but not before they had handed on their photostatics to relays of men with them. So, from the American end of the search, came some twenty photostatic prints, half of them belonging to babies who had died, the other half to those still living.

Whether living or dead did not concern Con. What interested him was that there were other babies in the land with black birthmarks. The instant he received the prints, he went into action, poring over them, his little group of colleagues around him.

Remarkable indeed were the birthmarks the plates revealed!

They ranged from incomprehensible lines and dots to a fairly understandable outline—incomplete—of a radio instrument! For hours Con sat pondering and considering, shifting the prints about on the broad table under the strong light, linking up one with another, until finally he began to see that the incomplete radio instrument design fitted into place like a jigsaw puzzle once he had ten of the prints in a given formation. He sat gazing down in amazement upon a perfect plan.

"Say, that's a spark-gap receiver!" Stonehurst exclaimed, the radio expert of the staff. "I'd stake my soul on it—! But I'll be damned if I ever saw one like that before!"

"Receiver, eh?" Con's eyes narrowed in thought.

"Yes; transmitter too, by the looks of it. . . ."

"Then," Con said, "these dots and dashes must be the code that can be received over this receiver. . . . I think we've got something, boys!" He glanced up at Stonehurst's sharp-featured face. "Any hopes of disentangling what this code is supposed to mean?"

"Nothing to it; it's ordinary Twentieth Century Morse, such as was used for long distance telegraphy a few years ago. I understand it well enough, and it's got me puzzled. Those dots and dashes don't signify any message; I figure they're only put there to show that Twentieth Century Morse will be used over that particular receiver. . . ."

"And who the hell would use Twentieth Century Morse in this fashion, anyway?" Chambers demanded.

"Only one man," Con said slowly. "Doctor Bradley, our former chief, who tried to get to the moon. . . ."

"That old crackpot!" Stonehurst exclaimed. "You're wrong, Con. He never got to the moon, anyway. He never *could*

have done it in that rocket of his! Remember how everybody laughed?"

"I remember," Con assented quietly. "But even so we *might* have been wrong. He's mixed up in this somewhere, I'm pretty certain. The only thing to do is build a receiver-transmitter to this design and see what happens. . . . Let's get started!"

CHAPTER IV

DEATH TO A WORLD!

WITH curiosity as the spur, the scientists of the Annex worked tirelessly from the resources at their command, following out in every detail the clearly-drawn black imprinted sketch shown in the photostats.

Con himself, indefatigable as ever, concerned only for the completion of the work, lashed himself and his followers to a super-human pitch, spent his time checking over the slow assembly of apparatus, becoming more amazed as he went along at the curious designing of the receiver, the peculiar arrangement of wiring necessary to receive and transmit. The more he progressed, the more obvious it became that the apparatus was designed to receive signals not from earth, but from outer space. . . .

To the troubles of the outer world, bewreathed in drifting blue vapors, the scientists had little time to listen. They worked day and night for two weeks before they finally had the apparatus completed exactly to the design on the birthmark photostats.

Once that was done, they all took a long sleep, recovered their lost energies; then at nightfall they gathered in an anxious group before the instrument with Stonehurst, the radio engineer, doing the actual operating.

He spelt out the usual KIH radio signal of the Annex, added "America," then waited in expectant silence. The receiver buzzer remained mute as the seconds ticked by on

the chronometer overhead. The scientists glanced at one another hopelessly.

Time and again Stonehurst repeated the signal. . . . Fifteen minutes dragged by. Then thirty. Forty-five—

"Guess we must have made a mess of it somewhere," Con said at last, his face haggard. "In that case—"

He broke off with an eager start as the receiver buzzer answered powerfully under electromagnetic stimulus. Instantly Stonehurst's brown hand seized the pencil and wrote busily. Not a sound save the zzz . . . zzzzz . . . zzz of the instrument disturbed the laboratory quiet. Steadily, Stonehurst went on writing, the others looking over his broad shoulders.

"Message received. This is Doctor Bradley, sending from Venus. I have been here four years. I am safe. My rocket, aimed for the Moon, had too much fuel. I could not stop, missed the Moon, and landed finally on Venus. I was not hurt. There is a friendly race here. . . ."

The communication stopped momentarily. The scientists glanced at one another blankly.

"He got to Venus!" Chambers gasped out. "Who'd have guessed it? You were right, Con—"

"Hello, Earth! For technical reasons, it is impossible to use short-wave radio from planet to planet. Earth's Heaviside Layer and Venus' own ionized upper blanket prevent a verbal communication. Spark gap and 20th Century Morse the only alternative. Glad my ruse to attract your attention succeeded. . . . Signal back if you hear me. I want to be sure before giving the next message."

Immediately Stonehurst sent forth an answering call, added the questions:

"How did you do the birthmarks? Is there any way to stop the gas overpowering Earth? Do you know what has caused it?"

The answer came after a long interval.

"For untold generations the Venusians have tried to warn Earthlings of the approaching gas cloud you have now entered. They knew it would happen. The Venusians tried to get in touch with Earth by short-wave radio, but it failed for the reason I have given. Then the spark gap method occurred to them, but they had no code you could understand, so the idea fell through. It is only since I arrived and decided to use a known code that a communication has become possible. . . ."

"For ages, the Venusians have tried to send a message by the medium of birthmarks. Some birthmarks, of the usual wine or brown variety, have borne resemblance to machines, radio equipment, Venusian letters of the alphabet—all manner of things which, through sheer ignorance, have failed to attract any attention on Earth. Since coming to Venus I have found out exactly how they do it. Their telescopic powers, perfected to pierce Venus' eternal cloud veil, can easily reach Earth and give a full length screen picture of any single individual. X-ray devices added to this immense telescopic power make it simple to see right through any human being and study the bone structure and organisms. . . . Among other things the Venusians are masters of cosmic rays—not the variety which flood down from outer space, but rays of their own making, created by the disintegration of matter. In this city from where I am communicating, there are some two hundred cosmic ray projectors, which they use for a variety of purposes, one giant one being used for producing earthly birthmarks. . . ."

THERE was a long pause as though Bradley were considering. Then he buzzed again and Stonehurst resumed writing steadily.

"Naturally, you are aware how a negative image in an enlarging machine can be imprinted in the positive, enlarged form on bromide paper? Imagine then, if you can, a tiny image imprinted on a slide in a cosmic ray projector of colossal size. Imagine this image so tiny that it demands atomic science to observe it! The Venusians can only see the slide by atomic means. . . . Now, basically this slide is lead, which of course blocks cosmic rays. It therefore blocks the cosmic rays except for the places where the tiny image is engraved. Picture the result. . . ."

"That image is flashed over the 60,000,000 mile gulf from Venus to Earth. Because it covers that distance it enlarges to small but visible proportions upon imprinting itself. The cosmic ray does not actually burn. It imprints the slide image at any spot desired by alteration of the controls governing the extent of the beam. It can pass through one form of flesh and imprint itself on another right behind it.

"What the Venusians did, then, was to single out among Earthlings any solitary woman about to give birth to a child. The ray passed through her. Whatever was on the projector slide was impressed painlessly on the baby's sensitive skin and so became a birthmark. . . . Do you understand this?"

"Carry on," Con said quickly, and Stonehurst transmitted the words.

"You have seen by now how the Venusians tried to warn you by a series of pictures on flesh. When I saw their work and realized what was facing Earth, I knew the only way to

attract attention was to use BLACK birthmarks, a simple enough matter by adjustment of wave-length. In that way it would arrest attention. Preferably I wanted a baby about to be born who would be near a scientist. I saw the connection, via the telescope, between Con Smith and the Graham baby. On that child we imprinted the solar system. As I had hoped, Con tumbled to the idea and followed it up. It was simple then to single out other babies in America and finish the job. . . ."

"And the gas?" Con dictated to Stonehurst.

"The gas is the dispersed atmosphere of Venus' moon. Many thousands of years ago Venus had a moon. Its atmosphere in entirety was poisonous; parts of such similar gas exist on Venus itself even yet in certain areas. I have named it nitrogen-x because of its similar spectrum to genuine nitrogen. An inner cataclysm blew the Venusan moon to pieces, leaving the nitrogen-x atmosphere free in space. It was inevitable, according to celestial mechanics, that Earth would float into that gas one day. You have done so. Actually you passed through it long ago; its duration is caused by the fact that it has mingled with Earth's oxygen. But there is a way to be rid of it. Now listen carefully. . . ."

THE scientists pressed forward anxiously to watch Stonehurst's handwriting.

"The Venusians have rid some of their poisoned areas of nitrogen-x by planting what are called EGUS trees. These, unlike natural trees, have a pale yellow solution for sap instead of chlorophyll. Naturally, on Earth, plant chlorophyll under the photosynthesis

of sunlight rids the air of poisonous toxics, but chlorophyll is useless for breaking down nitrogen-x. Hence your vegetation is dying.

"Your last chance is to drain all trees and plants that still live of their chlorophyll and replace it with EGUS sap. It will not harm them, and it will enable them to absorb nitrogen-x and give off normal pure gases. Gradually a new balance will be restored. The basis of EGUS sap is actually solution of rubber. It can be synthetically made from laboratory stock. Make it in the tens of thousands of gallons, spread your workers throughout the Earth, tell them to add the EGUS as they drain the chlorophyll, otherwise the plants will die. Now, here is the formula. . . ."

Stonehurst began to write down the chemical numerals and ingredients as fast as he could manage. In twenty minutes the formula was complete.

"Some day," Bradley's message ended, "I hope to return to Earth. It depends if I can find the right explosive to drive my rocket back. The Venusians will help me, because with all their vast knowledge, they still have not got space travel. I shall watch earthly events through the telescope. . . ."

LIKE a raging fire, the news of possible salvation flashed across the world through stricken cities peopled with deranged thousands. Those who were still sane obeyed the orders sent out from the Annex, and as fast as it could be manufactured and transported egus sap was transferred to the forests of the world where trees still lived, to those places where the gas had not yet reached.

It was desperate work. It demanded hours of grinding toil in heavy lead suits but because they knew that upon their suc-

cess depended the last hope of salvation, men and women the world over worked with a will.

In a month, vast progress had been made. The gassy areas in the period had shifted but little. The populations had shuffled themselves out as best they could to the areas least polluted, were waiting with desperate anxiety for the first signs of a let-up in the poison.

CON too, and his fellow scientists, were waiting—with a growing alarm as week succeeded week, as millions of trees were impregnated with *egus* sap. But the needed relief did not come! No; from north and south, from east and west, there came not a tale of lightening skies, but of deepening fog, of wreaths and banks of it, denser than ever before, closing down on the already stricken cities, from the midst of which came the laughter of the dying. . . .

Slowly, ruthlessly, the lowering cloud crept down on every continent. A hundred, a thousand times, thicker! It filled every valley now; it was opaque at three inches distant. The world was slowly vanishing in blue density. Life was stifling in a devil's chorus of insane laughter. And, worst of all, the stuff was now *penetrating lead*!

Con Smith was shaken to the depths of his being when he made this discovery—when he realized that the miasma had at last reached the mountain heights where the Annex was perched.

He began to realize the desperate nature of the situation when he found Nat Chambers laughing and rolling on the floor of the east observatory. Blue wraiths of gas were around him like steam. He died within minutes. . . .

Con and the other scientists were driven back to the last room of the great place, stood looking at each other with set faces, glanced at the blue against the windows, the faint haze in the muggy air.

"Well?" Stonehurst asked at last, in a level voice. "Where do we go from here?"

We've improved things—like hell! I doubt if there is anybody alive on earth now outside us! Even the *egus* factory workers don't answer the radio call. . . ." He stared grimly across towards the instruments.

Con rubbed his aching head. "I can't begin to understand this," he muttered. "I can't begin to . . ." He forced himself suddenly back into action, strode over to the spark transmitter and switched on the power.

"Call Venus!" he snapped to Stonehurst. "Maybe we can do something even yet. Must have got the formula wrong. . . ."

The engineer sat down, shrugging, depressed the button monotonously. The scientists stood around him in the slowly gathering haze, perspiration wet on their faces, their jaws lean and taut. Con rose out of a daze at an answering buzz.

"Ask him—" he started to say, then he stopped as a message went on coming through. Incredulous, he stared over Stonehurst's shoulder as he wrote down an amazing message.

"So you transferred the EGUS sap to your trees? Splendid! I have been watching you do that. And what happened? The EGUS sap broke down the nitrogen-x, yes; but it only broke it down into more molecules, multiplying its virulent power! Just as oxygen will break up under electric stimulus and add a molecule to produce ozone. And it didn't save you? That is what is amusing me! How it amuses me!

"Do you remember how the world laughed at me when I tried to fire my rocket into space? Do you think I swallowed those numberless insults without resentment? No!

"All that I told you last time about the gas, about the Venusian moon, about everything, was true—except about the EGUS sap. I lied there—cleverly! I cannot forget that a world laughed at Bradley, the greatest scien-

tist who ever lived. I have NEVER forgotten it. . . .

"I evolved my plan. I visited the poison areas of Venus and saw how EGUS trees intensified the gas' power. Such areas are left severely alone by the Venusians. I knew from my telescopic studies that you on Earth had found lead was a protection from the gas; I realized that my hope of all of you being destroyed was not going to materialize. You could survive behind lead indefinitely until the gas had assumed a breathable balance—unless I could intensify that gas!

"EGUS sap was the solution. . . . Hence my elaborate planning. But oh, how it was worth it!

"Do you know, I think these Venusian people believe me a lunatic. They say I have been so ever since I visited a poison area, but then . . . they are trying even now to restrain me! I—"

THE instrument suddenly stopped buzzing. With it, Stonehurst's hand dropped limply to his side. He gave the faintest of smiles, then slumped heavily forward on his notes.

Con steadied himself with terrific effort.

In his mind's eye he was picturing the mad Bradley being dragged away by Venusians. He mastered a mad desire to burst out laughing.

"Insane!" he breathed. "He said he visited a poison area. It was not enough to kill him but it deranged his mentality, even as it deranges people's minds on earth. His scientific genius, matured by a resentment, made him evolve a frightful scheme. . . . God! He avenged himself on all the people in the world! And we fell for it!"

The scientists nodded slowly. The cold, inhuman brutality of Bradley's plan was all too evident now. Only a madman could have thought of it, anyway. Humanity was dying out; of that there was no question—humanity destroyed by the perverted genius of a man under the influence of the selfsame gas . . . !

Con stood swaying on his feet. There was laughter in his ears now. The scientists in front of him were grinning insanelly.

He could feel great gusts of ironic laughter being torn from him, gusts that tore at his throbbing, twinging heart. The air was thick with deepening blue. . . . He swayed forward.

The darkness beyond was absolute.

FOR THE BEST COMICS ON THE NEWSSTANDS READ

PEP COMICS
BLUE RIBBON COMICS
TOP-NOTCH COMICS
ZIP COMICS

NOW ON SALE AT ALL NEWSSTANDS!!!

FAN MAG DIGEST

(A Regular Department presenting excerpts of interest from the Science Fiction Fan Publications)

New Yorker Reporter at Queens Science Fiction League Meeting

(The following item is from *Fantasy News*, the weekly fan newspaper of 31-51 41st St., Long Island City, N. Y., and relates to a recent meeting of a group of active science-fiction fans in Queens county, New York City.)

"Julius Schwartz introduced two women, Miss Canfield, a reporter from the famous *New Yorker* magazine, and a friend of hers.

"After the usual formalities, Miss Canfield was allowed to fire away any questions she wished to be answered by any of the fans present. She got the fan mag angle, organization, prominent fans, the fans' favorite and most disliked authors, conventions, and even complete dope on fan feuds! She claims that she is going to use it all, and it ought to smoke up the pages of the *New Yorker*, when and if it appears."

Science and Science Fiction

(Here are a couple of paragraphs from a speech given by William S. Sykora on the occasion of the World Science Fiction Convention. This speech was printed complete in *New Fandom*, the organ of the New Fandom Club, 603 S. 11th St., Newark, N. J.)

"Science in science-fiction must of necessity be of a popular, non-technical, thought-provocative, informative nature. But science-fiction without science is like coffee without cream, tea without lemon, or science-fiction fandom without a great general organization like New Fandom.

"The activities of any progressive fan organization must include a consideration of scientific possibilities of the future. Speculative discussion as to what may be our future civilization, how science may improve living conditions, possible super-scientific inventions and discoveries are not out of place by any means. Those of us

who wish to delve deeper into scientific mysteries and become scientists and engineers should not be discouraged, but should be aided whenever possible, and even though we ourselves are not scientists or technicians, nevertheless we must never forget that the sublime fascination of science-fiction lies wholly in its plausible scientific background. Science has a very definite place in science-fiction."

Biography of Ralph Milne Farley

(A recent issue of Harry Warner's fan mag, *Spaceways*, 303 Bryan Pl., Hagerstown, Md., featured a very interesting biography of Roger Sherman Hoar—the famous fantasy author who writes under the name of Ralph Milne Farley. We present here a few paragraphs from this item.)

"Ralph Milne Farley was born in 1887, somewhere in New England. He attended Harvard, played football, helped on the school paper, and made money by reporting sports for the *Boston Daily Post* on the side. He ended up by teaching geodetics and railroad surveying as a means of getting through college. When only 21, he was vice-chairman of the Massachusetts Democratic Committee, and ten years later was elected to the state senate while still in law school. Still later, he entered the Boston law office of Louis D. Brandeis, who later became a supreme court justice.

"He was then chosen by a Republican governor as legal advisor to the Massachusetts constitutional convention, and ended up by writing the first book on such things for decades. At the end of the World War I, after refusing a captain's commission, he entered the army as a private, taught ballistics, and invented a gadget to aim big guns by the stars. But when he was ordered to take an advanced course in ballistics at the U. of Minnesota, he objected—on the justification of having written the counsel

"He possesses an A.B., an M.A., and an LL.B. from Harvard. He is extremely well versed in ballistics, higher calculus, is an expert on unemployment insurance, and at present is a major in the United States Army reserves. He does extensive travelling about in this capacity. He has also been such minor things as a teacher of Civil Engineering, Military Engineering, and Higher Mathematics. At present he holds a technical position in Milwaukee.

"In fantasy, there is little need to go over his triumphs—the 'Radio Man' yarns of course, almost legendary up until now, when they are being reprinted—and all the rest; it would take almost an entire page to make a list."

About the Moon

(*Stardust*, 2906 Argyle St., Chicago, Ill., is the only printed fan magazine in the country, at this writing. Edited and copyrighted by W. Lawrence Hamling, it is replete with absorbing articles and stories of interest to science-fiction fans. Herewith we present a sample, excerpted from an article entitled "Double World" by Henry Bott.)

"A Lunar day is intensely hot, a night intensely cold. The surface is dotted with craters. Mountains of enormous breadth raise their tops. Barren plains (why meteors haven't made indentations into these

plains is still unexplained) cover a large portion of the area. No atmosphere tempers the weird, horribly depressive appearance of the deserted landscape. Undoubtedly, the first solar body to be visited by man, will be the Moon."

Merritt's "Moon Pool"

(Walter E. Marconette of 2709 E. Second St., Dayton, O., publishes a fan bag named *Science-Snaps*, from which we present a few notes about the works of A. Merritt.)

"With the appearance of 'The Conquest of the Moon Pool,' Merritt's place as first among fantasts was assured. Though the sequel is not as literary as the original, it still is perhaps the most gripping fantasy ever written. The two stories immediately appeared in book form (being considerably cut in the process) under the title 'The Moon Pool' (after the original), and thousands of copies were sold, many editions being printed.

"The popularity of this story has continued undiminished to the time of this writing. The book version was reprinted in magazine form in 1927 and again was tremendously praised. In 1933 or so, demands so numerous they could not be ignored brought forth another printing of the book form, several editions again being necessary. . . . It is certain that 'The Moon Pool' will live long after Merritt."

BLUE RIBBON WESTERN

ISSUE OF JUNE, 1940 HAS

A COMPLETE \$2.00 NOVEL

THE MESA GANG

by E. B. MANN

PROPHECY OF DOOM

by ROSS ROCKLYNNE

Zagameen had broken the Rule—the Rule that said Death to all Knowledge! But his Knowledge brings to the ignorant Imperians, last of the human race, the prophecy of a Doom that will roar in from the East, to destroy the last remnant of Mankind!



Imperians swept past and cried out in voices of terror!

IN THE large clearing beyond the orange trees and the vast fields of wild tomatoes and cantaloupes, the Council of Discipline, led by the bleak-faced Argus Nesban, advanced from the long-house, and formed a pitiless circle around the white-

faced Imperian whom they were to judge.

Hovering about the circle, almost two hundred in number, were others, quiet now as Argus was about to speak, to pronounce judgment on him who had broken the laws handed down for an unknown number of

generations to the present one.

Argus Nesban was still young, and his body was powerful, and his forehead was broad. He had inherited his leadership from his father, which was the Rule; but he had ever been a cold-hearted leader, who did without nothing that he could not take. And throughout all the Valley, from the Salton Sea to the north, and to the A'Mercan Canal on the south, there was little that a man might want that he could not pluck from a tree or vine—little, except a woman who did not return his love. Twice in the last five years, Argus Nesban had taken a new wife, and under pain of jailing would permit no least sign of indignation.

These things also thought Zagameen, who stood straight and tall on the judgment dais, his blue eyes very wide, his corn-silk hair falling far beneath his broadening shoulders. He would not show terror though it dwelt within him. Hate he also could not show, lest it destroy him and the hopes of mankind. Speak he could not, in remonstrance of the shameful thing that was to be done.

Dreadful silence settled, and then came the voice of Argus Nesban, sounding through the roar of escaping steam from the bubbling mud-pots and geysers on the salt shores of the Salton Sea.

"The Will of the majority shall be done, as speaks the Rule that guides us. We are gathered her to judge, and shall be judged by God if we do not judge as the Rule tells us to judge."

His voice drifted away into the bordering, fruit-laden trees. For the first time, his cold blue eyes rested on Zagameen, he of the soft, corn-silk hair.

"The Council of Discipline has met and deliberated, and from this, judgment has come for Zagameen. And also has come to us clearly the need for again impressing on the minds of all Imperians the code of the Elders."

His voice lashed out.

"Man ruled all the world, and learned

many things. Chief amongst these things that he learned was how best to kill his fellow men. For thousands of years he had killed, and ever sought better ways to kill, and found them—for every secret that he wrested from nature could be used to kill. Then came the Final War. Killing there was, across the face of the world. Diseases killed, by the millions. Airplanes fled across the raging sky, and killed, and their flyers were killed.

"And in the end humanity was utterly destroyed. Death to knowledge!"

BACK came the low-voiced chant, "Death to knowledge!"

Argus Nesban's glittering eyes came back to Zagameen's, and Zagameen gave stare for stare, his own hot bitterness at the senseless chant almost rising to his lips; but he spoke not.

"Zagameen has broken the rule, from childhood up. To all sides of us, beyond the Cochella Canal, and the A'Mercan Canal, and the mountains on the west, and the borders of the Salton on the north, lie the forbidden lands, the lands that were laid desolate by the men who destroyed their enemies, and in destroying them destroyed themselves. These lands, though they stretch around the Earth, we are forbidden, by the Rule, to enter! Zagameen has broken that rule. For he went beyond the Salton Sea and into the city of Salton, and there sought knowledge.

"The evidence of his iniquity lies beside him."

Still Zagameen made no motion, save to move his naked foot slightly, so that it might touch, in desperation, the four tattered books stacked on the judgment dais beside him. And the eyes of all the other Imperians, all that remained of the human race, one hundred ninety-nine in number, swung to the books and held there.

"Members of the council," again spoke Nesban, "What is your decision?"

Old Herambas, at the left side of Argus,

quavered: "The books are to be destroyed, and Zagameen is to be jailed for a period of four weeks."

Zagameen darted to the edge of the judgment dais, his face agonized. "No, Herambas!"

"So," said Argus Nesban softly, "you do not like to be deprived of your freedom."

Zagameen stopped stock still, his young, beardless face shocked. "Deprived of my freedom," he breathed. "That is nothing. It is the books I must have, and not my freedom. I will rot forever in the jail, Mentor, if only you will not destroy my books! Many, many years ago I wandered into the city of Salton, and there found a book, and would not have treasured it had not the Rule forbade books—and would not have learned to read had not the Rule forbade reading. I was a child, and thus knew I was doing wrong. And as I grew older, I found other books and many of them fell to dust beneath my fingers, and of them all, only four remain! And now I know it is not wrong to read, nor to learn! Nor is the Rule wrong! Punish me for having gone into Salton, but do not punish me for learning to read—for the Rule did not mean that all eternity were to pass before we strove again, not for knowledge, but for—wisdom!"

"The books shall be destroyed," said Argus Nesban. "The knowledge that was taught some of you, and Zagameen in particular, shall be forgotten."

"It shall never be forgotten!" cried Zagameen. "Men shall never forget that there is fire. I have rediscovered that rubbing makes fire. Who is there that will forget it?"

The Mentor's face tensed. "It shall be forgotten!" he hissed. "It shall not remain in the minds of any of us!"

"WHO is to forget that a log will roll?" cried Zagameen, addressing himself now to the alarmed assembly. "Who is to

forget that it will float on the canals, and that the very air we breathe will push against a leaf and make the log move faster? Who will forget these things that I have taught?"

The Council of Discipline stared at him, speechless.

Zagameen drew himself to a terrible height and flung a golden-brown arm to the east. "Who," he whispered, seeking each eye, "will forget what a tattered, yellow page in one of the forbidden books has taught me: That doom overhangs the Imperial Valley, the land of Man? Who will forget it?"

The throng stirred uneasily, and even the members of the Council looked at Argus Nesban with eyes of faint alarm. But Argus Nesban's golden-tanned face only twisted and whitened. When he spoke, his voice was tight and rage-filled.

"I demand," he said, facing the other eleven members of the Council, "that Zagameen be put to death! Already he has broken many of the rules that have been handed down to us. If he goes free to speak his mind, and free to marry, soon he will break the two-children law! Then what will become of us? We shall grow great in number, and soon shall so overflow the valley that there will not be enough food to feed us all."

A murmur of remonstrance ran around the council, and old Harambas, almost shocked beyond speech, muttered in awe, "There will always be food! How else could it be?"

Nesban drew his dignity back to him. "Zagameen breaks all the sacred laws, and blasphemes against the Ancients whose Word says that Man shall forever be happy in the Valley. He is not one of us. He will make others break the same laws, and will make others blaspheme against the Ancients. He must die."

This was too much, even for the silent throng that circled the Council. Alarmed, plaintive voices cried out, "No, no! Za-

gameen must not be killed. You are wrong, Argus Nesban, wrong!"

Argus Nesban's fists curled at his side. "The will of the majority must be done," he whispered, so low that few could hear him. "Zagameen shall not die, then. But he must promise, never again, upon his sacred word of honor, to break any Rule; never to venture beyond the boundaries laid down by the Ancients; never to seek knowledge; never again to speak of the knowledge he broke the Rule to gain. He must promise never to break the Rule."

HIS bright, cold eyes bored into those of Zagameen.

Zagameen stared back at him. "You cannot have me killed, Argus Nesban. The others will not permit it. I shall not make the promise."

But the circling throng cried out in terror, "Make the promise, Zagameen. You must make the promise. For if you do not, what will become of us?"

Zagameen's chiseled, gold-tanned young face paled. For a moment he stood with head held high.

He spoke, finally, as to the empty air, so low were his words. "I will make the promise. I will promise never again to break any rule—unless something terrible happens to the Imperians first!"

Argus Nesban relaxed, and drew his lips back from his gleaming white teeth in a smile; and the encircling throng sighed with relief.

"Zagameen has made the promise. He shall be jailed for a month. His books shall be destroyed. He shall never again break the Rule, unless," Argus Nesban added in amused deference, "something terrible happens to the Imperians first!"

It was done, and Zagameen was led away, and his books were placed in the hands of Argus Nesban, who sat down before three witnesses, and himself extracted pages from the books, and tore them into tiny bits, and then took the pieces to the

edge of the bubbling mud-pots and left them to flutter away on the steaming wind.

Zagameen would not die, nor would he ever break the Rule—for all knew that nothing terrible had ever happened to the Imperians, and, therefore, nothing terrible ever would happen.

* * *

The wind held thin and chill as it swept down out of the Chocolate Mountain slopes. The high-riding Moon spun webs of silver radiance through the night forest. The ripple of muddy waters lapping against the banks of the criss-crossing canals was the only sound to mar the far-reaching silence. The fragrance of continually fruitful trees permeated the softly sighing air, and was wafted to Zagameen, where he lay on the cold earth floor of his wooden cage.

He lay immersed in sadness, tracing again the years that had passed since first he had wandered into Salton. Many things he had learned from the books, of the vast civilization that was Man's; and had kept these things to himself until the foolhardy day when he had thought to teach the children of the village the elemental facts of fire and water and air. Or perhaps it was foolhardy. Perhaps. For in time, the children would believe him when he read to them the one tattered, yellowed page that prophesied, in language too strong to be denied, the doom that overhung the Valley, and that would—it could not be far in time—soon descend. Doom lay in wait, but now Zagameen's lips were sealed, until the doom itself came.

Suddenly, he heard a light footstep outside his cell, and a soft, tearful voice cried, "Zagameen!"

Zagameen rolled himself lightly to his feet, his heart beating faster as he went to the cell window.

"Elnas!" he cried softly, as the girl's slim body took form out of the darkness.

Two soft hands came through the orange wood grating and grasped his own.

There were tears in the girl's eyes. "Oh, Zagameen," she whispered, "it is so bad

to have you in the disfavor of the Council! Why, Argus Nesban was going to kill you!"

Zagameen gently touched the soft curve of her cheek. He smiled. "What would you have done if he had?"

"I would have *killed* Nesban. Then I would have thrown myself into the Salton Sea!" She nodded her head in solemn promise.

"And would have floated in its salty waters until the Sun fried you," said Zagameen, and laughed, and drew her closer to the bars and kissed her.

She drew back doubtfully. "Why did you do that?"

Zagameen's eyes lingered on the curve of her sweet lips. "Because I love you," he said promptly. "And because you love me too."

Even in the shadows of the orchard, he could see her blush, and then her lips trembled and she came forward and touched her lips to his. "Yes, I do." She searched his eyes. "You must not break any more rules, Zagameen."

"Unless something terrible happens," reminded Zagameen.

She clutched his hand involuntarily, her eyes growing big with fear. "You mustn't—ever, Zagameen. Never even think of it. For what if you should die? Then I would be alone! . . . But then," she drew a big breath, "nothing terrible will ever happen. Unless—?" Again her eyes searched his, but he slowly shook his head in the darkness.

"I have made the promise," he said, and there was despair in his voice. "I must not speak, I must not break the Rule—unless," and something of fear showed in his own face as he turned his eyes away from Elnas and looked into the east, where the great river thundered, "unless something terrible happens to the Imperians first."

THE MAN WHO BROKE THE RULE

TWO summers came and went, and peace reigned undiminished over the Imperial Valley, the last stronghold

of man, whose watchword was ignorance. And peace it was, for across the face of the valley, from north to south extremities, criss-crossed a system of canals, which, fed by the wild river, gave water and opportunity for plant and animal life in great abundance. The valley was fertile, and men did not work, nor was there aught of worry.

Worry? Sometimes a youngster broke a minor rule, sometimes an oldster. But none ever broke the big rules, for how could they? For the rules were axioms, given them by the ancients who had escaped the holocaust that swept the world. And, indeed, the laws laid down by the Ancients had been wise. Two hundred the Imperians were in number, nor ever, in all the countless generations, had that number gone above or below for long. What need had the human race of more than that? Two hundred could live in the valley without fear of a tomorrow, in a plentiful land which needed no slightest tilling of the soil.

Happy and lazy and contented were the Imperians; for in these last two years, Argus Nesban had kept his third wife, and seemed likely to keep her for the rest of his life; and he ruled his clan's small troubles wisely.

Zagameen lived, all his knowledge held in abeyance, but looked with longing eyes toward the west where, in the great tumbling cities on the sea coast, the knowledge of the ancients but awaited him who would secure access to it. Elnas by his side, they wandered the broad face of the valley, and followed the Cochella Canal, that led from the greater canal on the southern border.

And Zagameen would point, his eyes troubled: "Follow the canal and you will come to the source of our very life. For without the great river, we would be nothing. And yet, in the river also lies—"

Nor would he finish; and on this particular day, they turned and followed the trail back to the village, past the bubbling mudpots and the spouting geysers on the shore of the Salton Sea, and never dreamed of

what was to happen when they returned to the village.

Through the streets of the village they went, hand in hand, and did not note the frightened faces around them. Then, as if at a prearranged signal, Argus Nesban came walking down the street. His lower lip was hanging slack, and his red-rimmed eyes saw Elnas and Zagameen, and his eyes shifted from side to side of the street as he passed them and entered his own house.

They were not long in finding the trouble. Herambas himself told them.

"It is the end of our peace," he whispered, for he was lying deathly still on his cot. "The old evilness has risen again, and a woman lies dying in her house."

"Dying," repeated Zagameen, his face paling.

"Dying, and struck down by Argus' own hand."

A cold chill wrapped itself around Zagameen's heart.

"And why?" he whispered.

"It is the old story, Zagameen. Happy we are in the valley, and have been wise to stay here. But now it will never be the same, and the Imperians are done with and finished! Finished!" A sob caught in his throat. "For all things there are in the valley for a man at his will, all save love. Too often has Argus Nesban taken his bride whether she willed it or no; now it is once too often, for a woman lies dying in her house, and there is none to place a hand against Argus. Yet he has broken a rule greater than any you ever broke, though never did the Rule of the Ancients say aught of murder, for fear it would put the thought in our minds." He closed his eyes and his breathing was a shallow thing that had little life in it.

ALL through the small village the news sped, and men hid themselves in their homes, for they knew nothing of dealing with this horror that had come to the valley.

But that night, in the hour of greatest quiet, brazened forth a gong. Out from their houses men then trooped, frightened, reluctant, but too well versed in the Rule to do aught but obey.

His cheeks sunken, flaming with remorse, with horror at himself and what he had done, Argus Nesban stood on the great, flat-topped tree trunk that was the judgment dais, and let all men look upon him.

The Moon had risen, and shadows began moving, and when a shadow moved from the face of Argus Nesban, he spoke.

"Murder has been done," he said, "and I am the murderer."

He waited, but no man spoke a word. His gaunt face twisted, and looked out over the throng; and he found only faces that showed bewilderment, and in them he could find no hate.

"I am a murderer," said Argus Nesban. "What sentence will the Council pass upon me?"

And he looked at the Council of Discipline where they were grouped, but they could say nothing and could do nothing save look at Argus Nesban without comprehension.

The Mentor quivered as if an icy breeze had touched his heart, and threw out his hands. "What is in your minds for me?" he cried. "Is there no one to condemn me, to say I have broken the Rule?"

And even Zagameen stood silent, his fists knotted at his sides, his face pale and sweating, his mind telling him to step out and denounce Argus Nesban, but his tongue unwilling to obey. What could he say that Nesban had not said, that would whip these bewildered Imperians to reason and justice?

And after awhile, Argus Nesban stepped down from the judgment block, and walked like a dead man through the crowd, and went into his own house; and the gathering dispersed also.

When the Sun rose, people began to move forth again, on their endless pleasures. Argus Nesban himself came from his house,

and sat in front of it all day, and went to sleep again that night. And on the next morning, he arose, and ventured forth into the orchards to eat, and then came back, and cuffed a child soundly for running across his path. And the following day the Council of Discipline met and pronounced sentence on one of their number who had attacked a comely maiden and taken her into his house to be his wife. The sentence was not heavy, and, as pronounced by Argus Nesban, was upheld and obeyed. And in the month to follow, three major crimes were committed, the first of which were dealt with, justly, by imprisonment; and the third of which—murder—was dealt with unjustly, for the murderer, having followed in the footsteps of Argus Nesban, who had gone unpunished, was imprisoned also.

ZAGAMEEN stood looking out over the valley, to the east, a skin of water stretched over his shoulder. Elnas stood partly behind him, but so near that her bare shoulder brushed his.

"I am afraid," she said, and he felt her quiver.

"I will be back," said Zagameen, keeping his eyes fixed away from hers. "I am going beyond the Cochella Canal and up into the mountains. And when I return, I will know what it is that threatens the valley."

"I am afraid of Argus Nesban," said the girl.

Zagameen turned, a look of steel coming into his eyes. "If Argus Nesban speaks to you, or touches you, tell him that when I return I will kill him!"

She shook her head, and her eyes filled with tears. "No," she said. "You won't, Zagameen. *They* will kill you! For you are breaking the Rule."

He put his large hands on her bare shoulders, his eyes troubled. "I am breaking the Rule, but not my promise. I must go. The days of men in the valley are done forever. Soon we must go, and it is best that way. For a butcher rules us, and has but to rule

us a short while until we are all butchers."

She met his eyes steadily. "If you come back and find that I am the wife of Argus Nesban, what will you do?"

For long and long he met her eyes with his own troubled ones; then he kissed her; and in the next moment was gone down the trail, past the bubbling mud-pots, toward the yellow, golden brightness of the Cochella Canal where it crawled around Salton Sea through its hot channel.

And Elnas went back to the village, and in the day to follow told no one that Zagameen had gone.

BUT on the second day of Zagameen's departure, Elnas wandered near the spot where they had parted, as if to recall Zagameen's presence back to her. And though the roar of the escaping steam from the geysers on the shore of the Sea filled her ears still, on this day, so expectant was she of Zagameen's unscheduled return, that when she heard footsteps behind her, she quivered with delight, and whirled—only to stop stock still as she saw Argus Nesban standing in the trail before her.

She moved back a step as he approached slowly across the path, moving with a casual grace.

"What do you want?" she whispered.

"Your lover has gone," said Argus. "I have come to take you. Long have I looked at you, and desired you, but could not fulfill my desires. You are mine."

"No," said the girl, still moving backward. "No. Zagameen is returning! Go away!" She raised her arm, held it out stiffly before her, pointing rigidly, the outstretched finger touching Argus Nesban's chest. "Go away!" she gasped, and knew that behind her as she moved was the beginnings of the soggy flats that gave upon the mud-pots.

"Zagameen will not come back," said Argus. He swept her arm aside with one movement, and with another, grasped it,

pulled her to him, and kissed her harshly, brutally.

"You are mine," he said. "I am without another mate. You are mine. What is there to stop me?"

SUDDENLY she squirmed, and cried out, and beat at him with small fists—and strove to turn and send him staggering into the mud-pots. But he only held her the tighter, though she screamed piercingly; and finally became limp, and breathless from the relentless pressure of his encircling arms. Then he let her go, grinning his cold triumph, and she sank to the soggy ground, and remembered only her screams, and hoped that Zagameen, far, so far away, had heard them.

He was carrying her now, back to the village, moving swiftly, easily, and though a strange wind, unheard of in its strength, began to blow, and though hollows in the ground were strangely filling with water, he took no notice and carried her back to the village.

And not until he was walking down the very central street of the village, occasional Imperians looking toward him, but saying nothing, did his knowledge of external things touch his mind. Then he stopped, Elnas fast in his arms, and knew that far away to the east was a rushing roar that filled the heavens and echoed back to his ears, that the very trees around the village were bending under the onslaught of a steadily rising wind.

He stopped and then slowly turned his face upward and thus stood, and the fierce wind blew back the long black strands of Elnas' hair, and seemed likely to capsize the fragile houses of the Imperians.

Then, frowning, he moved on again, and had almost reached his house, when he heard light footsteps behind him, and beheld—Zagameen.

"Woman-stealer," Zagameen lashed out, his voice like a thunder-cloud. He came forward on the balls of his feet, took the

girl from Argus, and then put her upon the ground. Trembling with rage, he started toward Argus.

But Argus Nesban folded his arms across his chest, and said coldly, "Return to your house, Zagameen. On the morrow you shall be reported to the Council of Discipline."

A thin smile etched itself across Zagameen's lips. "The Rule of the Ancients is done, and the Council of Discipline, that knows no discipline, is dissolved by a force greater than you or I. I am not going to kill you, Argus Nesban, I am going to let you kill yourself," and leaving Elnas where she lay, he turned his back, and leaped to the judgment dais, while the strange wind howled, and the ominous rush and roar from the east filled the air.

THE ROAR FROM THE EAST!

ZAGAMEEN held up a hand, and thus caught the attention of the people below him, and waited until those in the orchards returned, running, fear and dismay on their faces.

"Imperians," Zagameen cried to the muttering throng, and they quieted—but not because of him, for Argus Nesban now stood before the council dais and it was on him they placed their eyes, and because of his look that they were silent.

But resolutely, though Argus Nesban had brought a new, cold fear to Zagameen's heart, Zagameen again faced the throng.

"Imperians," he cried again. "Heed me! Flood rushes on us from the east! The sound of it, the faraway roar of it, the vibrations of its approach fills the ears! It sweeps a wind before it! To the east it has risen beyond the banks of the canals, and is now one mighty canal that sweeps all vegetable and animal life before it!

"Imperians! I stood on a hill below the San Barino Mountains, and as I looked at the sky-line where the great river flows, I saw a piece of the sky-line chip out and saw the white, swirling waters of the river come

through. And seconds later I heard the thunder as the river-wall fell! And I waited no more, but came back to the village, running, for the flood was on my very heels!

"And now, it flows through our valley, and every moment it grows in height and in bulk and in swiftness. In but a short time, it will sweep into our village, and into the Salton Sea. The Salton Sea will rise, and rise, and flood the valley. And then man will be done with forever!"

He pointed imperatively into the west. "Beyond lies safety, Imperians. Flee, if you would not die!"

"There is nothing to fear," said Argus Nesban, his voice following so closely on Zagameen's that it might have been merely a continuation of Zagameen's plea. "I tell you this, I, Argus Nesban, your leader, who has ruled you these many years." And he raised his hand as if to bestow a benediction, and the throng was silent, though the trees and the heavens and the far distance were not.

Argus spoke again. "Long and long ago the Ancient Ones, who knew no wrong thought, came to the valley with their people and taught them certain things. Amongst these was that no man should—ever—leave the valley. For, said the Rule, in the valley man should always find that which he desired. And should he leave the valley, he would work for his living, and in times to come would spawn, and grow great in number, and divide, and war again, and destroy himself.

"The Rule which the Ancient Ones laid down shall be followed now and forever by you who are their descendants."

Zagameen cried bitterly, "The Ancient Ones were not gods, Imperians! They were but human beings, and human beings err. Even they knew nothing of the flood that was destined to sweep the valley. But others knew of it, for I read of it in the Book. Once before, how long ago I do not know, the valley was flooded by the great river's breaking a canal heading. And men

fought with their science to save the valley from inundation, and succeeded. But we cannot stem the river, where it has broken a hole through its canyon." His voice rose passionately. "If we obey the Rule of the Ancients, it is the Ancients who have murdered their own flesh and blood!"

A RUMBLE grew in the crowd, an ominous rumble of threat, that drowned out the rumble that came from the ground, and the shriek of the flood-born wind; but before their recriminations could result in physical anger, there was a rending from the orchards that surrounded the clearing, and a wild bellowing. A small herd of wild cattle broke through, looked about with red-rimmed eyes, and then charged for the opposite side of the clearing and disappeared, leaving a wild turmoil of human beings in their wake. Other animals, pigs, goats, hares, sheep, followed.

Zagameen, exasperated and frightened beyond all measure, cried bitterly, "Go then, to the open spaces beyond the orchard and see if the Ancient Ones can save you from a peril they knew nothing of!" and he leaped from the dais himself, and caught Elnas to him. As soon as he saw the smile on her lips, he kissed her, and then, his arm around her waist, went for the clearing himself, on the heels of more slowly-moving Imperians.

The two hundred lined up there on the edge of the knoll on which stood the village, and looked out over a sight never before seen by man.

Far and far away were the San Bernardino Mountains, misty, uprising hulks of majesty, purple in their farness. And far across the Imperial Valley, losing themselves in the distance, reflecting the hotness of the Sun from their muddy surfaces, were the canals that men had built so long ago.

To the eye, each had visibly swollen, broadened, and down the center of each rushed a head of water as tall as two men, and a roar filled the inverted dome of the

sky, and was thrown back from the sky so that the echoes clashed. And behind the head of the flood, all the canals had broadened out, until the swollen torrents touched each other, merged, became one, and sullenly rushed toward the Salton Sea.

Silently the people watched, nor moved from the spot through the hours, as the crest of the flood struck the Sea, and continued to pour into the Sea, until it overflowed its salty shores, and covered the mud-pots, and crept ever higher toward the low knoll on which stood the village of the Imperians.

Zagameen found Argus Nesban, and said without inflexion, "The days of men in the valley are done. We must see that our people are saved."

But Argus Nesban stood straight and still, looking with glazed eyes on the boiling expanse of water that stretched both to north and south, and east and west, and was ever rising higher.

He whispered tonelessly: "There is nothing to fear."

BELOW foot, the ground grew soggy, and the trees of the orchards were shaken into such motion that fruit dropped continuously, and at times trees themselves crashed. As the waters came higher, children splashed about until they became frightened at the undercurrent.

Old Herambas said wretchedly to Zagameen, "The Rule cannot be wrong, Zagameen! Yet, what is this? If the waters continue to rise, then we shall drown! It is the judgment of God!"

"It is the judgment of the river," said Zagameen without life in his voice. "As the river flows, so does it carry silt to raise the level of its bed. It overflowed its own mountainous shores, and in overflowing broke away the wall of mountain that hemmed it in; and now, as happened farther back than anyone knows, it again pours all its body into our valley, in a never-ending flow."

"It is the judgment of God," whispered

old Herambas and fixed his faded eyes on Argus Nesban.

But Argus Nesban walked back and forth amongst his people, saying over and over, "The rise of the water will stop. The water will recede. There is nothing to fear."

BUT all during the night the waters rose, and so great was the faith of those who believed in Nesban that they slept that night in their own homes, and believed that by the morrow the danger would be over. In the morning, with the shroud of mist rising over the valley to shut out the far distances, they awoke, and found then that Salton Sea was a mighty lake, that stretched without end; that the canals that criss-crossed the Imperial Valley were buried beneath inconceivable tons of water; and that the Imperial Valley as the Imperians knew it was no longer a valley, but swiftly becoming a vast inland sea, soon to make its own outlet through gaps in the mountains, and to bury and drown the Imperians beneath its own resistless flow.

Herambas ran like a devil through the early morning, water sloshing at his ankles. Through the village he ran, with thunder in the sky, and lightning, and rain, shouting aloud the doom that a terrible God had sent.

Zagameen quieted him in a rage. "Quiet, old man! There is nothing to do now."

"Nothing?" cried the old man, and suddenly swept his hand toward Argus, where he stood calmly, arms folded across his chest, awaiting the recession of the flood. "There stands he who has brought us our doom. Did he not murder, and did not he not close our mouths against him? There he stands," old Herambas shrieked to one and all, as thunder roared and water crept upward along his skinny, bowed legs. "Kill your destroyer! Perhaps then the waters will go back into the river, and the break in the river wall will heal!"

But the throng cried in terror, "No, no! The flood will pass!"

But without waiting to hear what was

further said, Zagameen turned and, with Elnas, waded to the edge of the knoll where the water became abruptly deeper. He held Elnas tightly while he looked out over the rolling wastes, and though his heart was heavy, he turned to her with a smile playing on his lips. "This is the end of the Imperians. There is nothing that anyone can do to save them. It will be their Rule which killed them—and Argus Nesban."

Then he stood straight and tall and gestured out across the wastes where the magnificent, tumbled city of the fallen people lay. "A civilization awaits us, Elnas, and we have but to go there and, in time, rebuild it."

Without more ado, he went back into the orchard and in a space between two trees, he gathered old, stout logs, until they numbered in the dozens. Then, from trees, he unwrapped strong vines, and so worked over his raft, until, with the Sun high in the misty sky, it was completed.

And when he had finished, the water was rising toward his hips, and the raft itself floated off the ground, and was rising ever higher with the water.

His plan in mind, Zagameen bade Elnas stay where she was, and then left her, and went back to the flooding village, where the bedraggled people were standing without sound, hip deep, some of their children, as many as could crowd it, placed out of harm's reach on the flat-topped tree trunk that was the judgment dais.

This scene Zagameen took in with a roving eye, and fastened his gaze on those children who were held in their mother's arms, crying, whimpering, and no longer eager to wade. Slowly Zagameen huddled with the people, and took a girl child from its mother's arms, to ease her burden. From another woman he also took a boy child.

Thus he stood, until the attention of the mothers in question was focused mainly on the problem of keeping themselves from being sucked under by the ever-strengthening under-tow. Steadily the muddy brown

water, abob now with cantaloupes and tomatoes and oranges and other fruits, rose. As they rose, Zagameen took two other children, and perched them on his shoulders, and held the other two in his arms.

Then, as the water rose above Zagameen's hips, and there was no longer any hope of escape for the Imperians, their whimpering rose also; and the rise of the water became too much, even, for Argus Nesban.

Without thought of any save himself, he waded, swam, toward the central dais, tried to clamber to its top. And his very weight, combined with the resistless push of the current, tore the old tree trunk from its rotten roots, and it tipped.

Zagameen, forgetting his own task, gave a cry, and started toward the judgment dais; but too late.

A HUNDRED voices rang out, and above them all came the shriek of old Herambas: "It is the end! It is the end!"

The judgment dais toppled, and spilled its load of whimpering children, and emptied them into the flood, though Argus Nesban clung to the bobbing tree trunk. Zagameen stopped stock still, looking on with horror. Children screamed as they struck the water, and for a moment the spot was a mass of tiny arms and legs. Mothers rushed screaming to their children, passed by those drowning ones who were not their own, and thus did not succeed in saving any. Herambas rose out of the water almost at Zagameen's elbow, his gray, stringy hair plastered down over his face. He clutched at Zagameen, and gasped, "Zagameen Zagameen! Save me!"

But Zagameen only said softly, "Your time is finished, Herambas. Sleep in peace!" And the old head sank and returned no more.

Then Zagameen turned against the current and set his jaw, and went off into the uprooting forest, with the shrieks and groans of the mortally afraid and the drowning bedlam in his unheeding ears.

He found Elnas, cold, shivering, blue-faced, clinging to the edge of the illy-constructed raft.

"I do not have the strength to lift myself upon it," she gasped.

Zagameen did not answer, but hoisted his heavy burden of four onto the raft, made sure of their safety, and then lifted Elnas in his strong arms and placed her aboard also.

And then, with one sad look around, he clambered up himself. His weight listed the raft so that it seemed likely to turn over at any moment, for half of it was immersed in water; and no matter how Zagameen rearranged weights, thus it remained.

All that day they lay there, while the water rose, and bore the raft upward toward the tops of the bedraggled, lashing trees. Three times, Imperians were swept past, clinging to small logs or mere twigs, and cried out in voices of terror for Zagameen to take them in. But Zagameen was forced to deny them, and so they floated away into the encircling darkness.

The night passed, and the Sun rose, and all that the six of them could see was a

broad expanse of water, with mountains rising far in the distance. Of the Imperial Valley there was nothing, save for the tops of trees sticking up through the water.

"They are all dead," said Zagameen sadly, and with grief held her trembling, cold body tight in his arms. Then he looked deep into her eyes, and smiled away the sadness in her face.

"But the human race still lives."

With the coming of sunset, Zagameen, using a makeshift oar, paddled toward the mountains on the west, toward the tumbled, magnificent city of the ancients on the west coast, his rescued children somberly quiet, though hungry, around him.

And once, but he knew he was mistaken, he thought he saw the tilted tree trunk that had been the judgment dais; and thought he saw a man clinging to it; and thought he heard Argus Nesban cry, as he saw them, and slipped beneath the waters, "There is nothing to fear!"

And Zagameen wondered, with a chill, if with that last obstinate, brave cry, Argus Nesban had truly known that there was nothing, nothing at all to fear, now.

SPORTS WINNERS

JUNE, 1940

EIGHT ACTION PACKED STORIES

Baseball... BIG NOISE OF THE BULL-PEN.....T. W. Ford
Track..... INVITATION MILE.....C. Paul Jackson
Basketball. HOOP HOBO.....Zene Tuttler
Fight.....BATTLER'S GHOST....William Campbell Gault
Baseball... YOU GOTTA SLUG.....W. H. Temple
Baseball... THE PUT-OUT KID.....Bud Nelson
Motorcycle
Race.....TWIN CYLINDER BLUFF.....Harold Rogers
Fight..... THE MILLION DOLLAR MAULER..Tom Grover

NOW ON SALE!

THE CITY UNDER THE SEA

by DUANE W. RIMEL

Two men of the modern world are cast into a strange undersea kingdom!—Belton, traitor to the surface world, who plans to conspire with the rulers of the lost city to use their super-science against the nations of the upperworld—and Huffman, who fights a hopeless battle to save his world from ruin!

I KNOW that my story of the lost race will sound incredible, but you must believe it. I have waited many years to tell this—waited so that I could present a picture undistorted by imagination and nightmare—waited and hoped that time would dim that horror and the exquisite memory of a love forever lost. No balm will heal that wound, no drug nor bottle can ever let me forget Ala the wondrous—

It was more than a wave . . . a monstrous column of pale sea-green!



Ala, the beautiful creature from the city beneath the sea. And sometimes, I am glad that I can remember . . .

The curious wine-colored diving suit hangs in my study today, and locked within my safe is the slip of vellum covered with odd hieroglyphics that no etymologist can decipher. It is best, perhaps, that they cannot, for the world is yet too savage and warlike to use such knowledge wisely. Scientists who have examined the diving suit admit that it is decades ahead of anything on the market today, but they think some crank invented it! Let them laugh; some day that race of super-men beneath Khersoness will arise and astound the world!

The episode began on the floor of the Black Sea, two miles from Sebastopol. I was a diver with the Grinevich Expedition, tabulating certain information concerning the ancient Greek city of Khersoness, which sank beneath the sea two thousand years ago. We were sending information—by phones in our helmets—to technicians and draftsmen on the “mother ship,” who were drawing maps of the place.

WHILE the dredging and exploration was under way, you may have read Consolidated Press items regarding two divers who were lost and reported dead, their cables and air-hoses mysteriously slashed on the ocean bottom. These men were Kurt Belton and Jon Huffmann, an American. Then three days later, you doubtless read about the man picked up on a desert isle near Sebastopol—a man carrying a strange diving suit and professing to be one Jon Huffmann. You may have joined the press in smiling at his wild tales of a vast undersea city, where he had lived, he said, the whole time since his disappearance. The world would not believe that this man was Huffmann, although his resemblance to photographs of the original Jon was striking. And then the world sighed and forgot the raving lunatic. *I was that man.*

Our work was slow and tedious. I had

bluffed my way into the service through the influence of my friend, Kurt Belton, a Baravianian, and an experienced diver. Later I regretted my boldness. I knew little about under-sea operations, but Belton and I usually worked together, and he knew enough to keep me on for three weeks—until the curious accident occurred.

That day we were assigned to a deeper and unexplored area, where visibility was poor and verbal description difficult. We moved slowly through deep silt, seeing, amidst fantastic clumps of vegetation, great, lichen-covered pillars, dating unmistakably from the Hellenistic period, yet so obscured by debris that accurate observation was almost impossible. The ocean floor was unusually rough. Suddenly Belton lifted his arm; a danger signal.

I WADED toward him. He pointed down, close to his metal-shod feet. The beam from my torch lit his helmet. His round face beyond the barred glass seemed excited. I looked. His light revealed a wide stairway slanting downward into the watery gloom of a large cavern. Over twenty feet below the steps ended, and the passage turned at right angles. A stair so remarkably preserved and so free of rubble was amazing, uncanny. No current swirled from this puzzling shaft.

Belton touched my arm, motioned that he would descend. I started to give an account over the phone, but he halted me with a familiar gesture. This was against regulations, but, why not? My friend called for more cable and started down, his torch gleaming weirdly on the steps, which I noticed were rounded and worn, as if from centuries of use. What kept the tunnel so clean?

I followed, telling Uroff we were entering a deep ravine. We went downward slowly, came to the bottom of the stair and turned. No debris blocked our way. Incredible!

Our lights stabbed ahead, revealing a side

stone corridor. Dark, unfamiliar fish darted past. The passage continued for perhaps thirty feet, and ended, at a door. At least, it appeared to be a door.

We advanced cautiously, keeping our cables and air-lines free. Belton touched the smooth stone obstruction, flashed his torch over it. Then I saw a handle—a curious protuberance which did not resemble any we had seen in the sunken city above. Belton reached for it. I had a sudden impulse to stay his hand, and later I cursed myself for not doing so. I felt that we were entering a forbidden place. But I was eager as he to explore the mystery.

Belton tugged. The door moved, outward! I helped, and the crack widened. Our torches lit another passage, like the first. Its walls, too, were polished clean.

We moved slowly. Our cables were getting heavy. We couldn't go much further. Something in front of us moved. We halted. At the end of the corridor a stone slab was opening! Then we saw the impossible!

Two red-helmeted figures appeared as if by magic from behind the massive portal—*human* figures. They held strange weapons. Pink lights on top of their shiny helmets illuminated the entire tunnel, dwarfing our yellow beams. Only their eyes were visible.

They indicated, by odd motions, that we surrender. I was so dumfounded, I could not move or think. Belton's hand started toward the metal hook at his belt. From the weapons flashed two bright blue rays. They struck his helmet, and he slumped, his face twisted with pain. Slowly he fell to the stone floor. Damn them; had they killed him? I moved toward him, but the figure ahead waved its gun. I decided to stand still.

They came forward cautiously. The leader motioned at the door behind him. I walked. The second creature seized Belton and dragged him like a sack of grain. Suddenly I came to my senses. I shouted into my phone. I waited. No reply. I tried

again, but no welcome voice rang in my ears. The line was dead . . . shorted, perhaps, by the strange blue ray, which seemed to be some kind of an electrical impulse.

I was guided to the stone door whence they had emerged. Intelligent beings here—beneath the Black Sea? Weird beams of light that killed at a distance . . . Had they killed? Poor Belton lay face downward, limp, unmoving. I cursed and prayed for a chance to strike back.

The door opened. Beyond it I glimpsed other red-suited figures! Madness to turn on my guard. I was outnumbered, and the men were swift and sure in their movements, as if they had lived in water all their lives.

Bewildered and amazed, I was pushed through the doorway. We entered a square room, lighted by red nodes on the ceiling. The two men who captured us moved toward the door, began closing it. My air-line would be smashed!—Belton's, too. If he still lived . . . These red suits had no attachments.

The door closed. At that instant, the leader raised his arm and a ray of blue stabbed me. My brain turned to ice. I slipped and fell into a great abyss.

I AWOKE slowly, painfully. My ears roared, my head seemed to be sheathed in snow which melted drop by drop to release my jangled thoughts. I was lying on my back, breathing air. No helmet—no diving suit . . . Where in hell? I opened my eyes; sat up. Weird, red light slanted through barred windows in the ceiling. Four stone walls surrounded me. I was alone. The blue ray must have had a paralyzing effect only. If so, was Belton alive?

Soft paddings sounded overhead—strange, inaudible voices. A section of the ceiling moved. I scrambled to my feet, swaying drunkenly. My head sang and I fought nausea. A narrow ladder was lowered, and a face bulked into that square of red light—an angular, evil face, white as

alabaster. The man held a weapon. Another blue-ray gun?

"Come up," said the creature, in English—my native tongue—here! I shook my head dazedly and climbed the ladder, stepped upon the smooth floor of a slender corridor. The man held my attention instantly. He was about five feet eight, frail of body, and had the whitest skin I ever saw. A black, square-cut beard jutted from his chin. His prominent cheek-bones, long thin nose and lean face reminded me of pictures of ancient Greeks or Egyptians. He wore a loose yellow cap over raven locks that hung to his shoulders; yellow jacket, and shorts that ended above his knees. His broad forehead and deep-set, piercing eyes denoted intelligence.

I rubbed my chin—a three-day growth of beard. Had I lain in that hole all the time?

The stranger smiled wryly. "Walk, Mr. Huffmann," he said, in clipped, precise English.

"Who in blazes are you?" I snarled. "Where am I?"

"Proceed," he said stonily.

I watched for a chance to dig my thumbs in his lean neck, but the gun was on me. I walked down the corridor.

We passed many branching avenues and curtained doorways. Bright red lights were everywhere. Finally we came to an ornately carved panel that reminded me of certain Egyptian bas-reliefs. Yet, these were different, almost alien—a departure from all orthodox or worldly designs. Armed guards beside the door stared at me curiously and sneered.

The jailer opened the carved rectangle. I faced a great assembly room. Several natives stood beside a raised platform, which was draped beautifully with purple satin. In a chair on the rostrum sat a middle-aged man whose distinguished look and bearing set him head and shoulders above the men around him. And beside that man was—Belton!

TRAITOR TO THE SURFACE WORLD

I RAN forward. "Belton! You old son-of-a-gun! Where—"

"Halt!" the guard shouted, leaping in front of me. "You will say nothing until King Khorlu asks you a question."

Belton did not smile or raise a hand. He was garbed in their hateful yellow! What ailed him? The guard ushered me nearer the throne, but the Baravianian would not look at me.

"You are here to be sentenced for trespassing on the kingdom of Altair!" Khorlu said sternly. His pale, thin lips writhed into a grin; his bleak eyes blazed fiercely.

"Wait!" I cried. "What about Kurt—?"

"Silence!" roared the guard. "You heard. Bellow again, and I will blast off your ears!"

Pent-up rage stormed my brain. The throne room wavered and seemed to dance. I was weak, weak . . . I staggered, righted myself before I fell. The gravity seemed tremendous. How deep in the earth were we?

The King's voice came faintly. "—put in a suit and given one hour's supply of oxygen. If you find the land of the sun, you may live. Guard, take him away. His ignorant rage no longer amuses me."

I retreated, shaking my fist. Curse Belton! The black-hearted traitor smiled as the jailer dragged me away. How had he squirmed into the King's confidence?

Hours later, in my cell, I was awakened by a light tapping overhead. I crawled from the cold stone floor, weak and dizzy. Food and drink had been given me, but I was still ravenous. The tapping came again.

"Who's there?" I growled.

"Quiet," said a soft voice.

I peered upward. Beyond the bars I saw a small, delicate face. A woman! She held her finger to her lips. I could see little more than a dim silhouette, but her manner gave me hope.

"Mister Huffmann?" Her voice was rich, vibrant.

"Yes. What do you want?"

"I saw you today—in the throne-room. I think I can help—"

"Listen," I snapped. "If this is a trick, get out!"

"Hush," she whispered, patiently. "Someone will hear you. I sent the guard on an errand to the laboratories. He won't be gone long." She pressed a package through the bars.

"Here is more food. I know what they give prisoners."

The fragrant odor of cooked meat tempted me to wolf it on the spot. Maybe she was telling the truth . . .

"How can I get out of here?" I inquired.

She sighed. "That is difficult, but I think I know a way. Here is a red-ray gun. It should melt the bars. You will have to be very careful—" She passed the strange pistol to me. I seized it, gloating—far from freedom, but a fighting chance.

"You are my savior!" I choked. "What is your name?"

"Ala, of the First—" She paused as if afraid to finish.

"Call me Jon, if you wish," I said.

"I like that," she said simply. "Now listen closely while I tell you where to go, and how to reach the air-locks—if you get out. I wish I could go with you, but that is impossible . . ."

I listened. My life depended on it. "I have a paid assistant at the gates," she continued. "He has a suit hidden there for you, with enough oxygen for many days. You can surely reach the island above Altair. It isn't far and our suits are light."

"How will I recognize this—paid man?"

"Don't worry; he will recognize you and show you where the equipment is. After that, you take your own chances."

"Wait," I said. "What about Belton? Is he crazy?"

"He and Khorlu have large plans."

"Plans—"

"Yes. They are going to conquer Russia."

Her simple statement floored me. Then I laughed.

SHE shook her head. "You make fun of me. I mean what I say. My people are very wise. They know things about the sea that your races never suspect. They know how to *control* it; make it live and work."

"Water — *alive*?" I snorted. "You're crazy. Water has no body; no—"

"It is true, I tell you!" she flared. "Long ago my people discovered the secret of the atom's power and the formula that moulds water and makes it alive. The Guardian of the Secret can make water monsters, and my people command them, as you did your negroes before the Civil War."

"You know American history?"

"We learn many things here, Jon."

"So Belton and Khorlu are going to conquer Russia—with water . . ."

"It can be done," she said emphatically. "There are no size limitations."

Cold water seemed to trickle down my back. Great God! The entire world would be thrown into a panic. Monstrous columns of water sweeping over cities; killing, crushing . . .

"I can't leave now," I groaned. "Not with all that—"

"No!" she cried. "You must do as I say—go to the gates as quickly as you can. This is the sleeping period. The time for your banishment is not far off—two hours by your count. Promise me you will go. I will take care of Belton."

"How?" I demanded. "If what you say is true, what can you do against a king and a madman?"

"Never mind," she said. "I know a way. Will you promise?"

"All right," I said, reluctantly. "If you kill that traitor, it's okay with me. Wait. Why are you so kind to me, an outsider?"

"That is a mystery, perhaps," she said, looking away. The scarlet light made her dark hair a halo of lambent flame. An in-

toxicating perfume stole into my cell.

"How long has your race lived here?" I inquired.

"For ages and ages, Jon. They came to Crimea from ancient Egypt, a small band of adventurers who foresaw the decay of their civilization in Africa. They established a city where Khersoness once stood. Then the Greeks filtered in and began driving them out. Xando, a great leader of ours, conceived the fantastic plan of living under the sea. He was very wise and worked half his life on the idea. At last he and his followers had a small retreat built, which he called Altair. Some of my ancestors had mingled with the Greeks and would not go, but a handful of the faithful retreated from the land of the sun, and we, their ancestors, are here today.

"Later the Greeks became very powerful, and my people heard that they were planning to destroy us, because we had grown and flourished and they were afraid of us. Meanwhile my people had discovered the Secret of the Water. Before the Greeks could strike (exactly *how* they were going to destroy us I have never learned) our scientists sent great water things to the city. They undermined it, and Khersoness sank beneath the waves. No nation has troubled us since that day—"

"By the Great Father!" I swore. "I wish Grinevich knew about that—"

"Listen!" she hissed. "The guard is coming. I must go. Good-by, Jon—" Her voice sounded queer.

"So long, Ala," I said. "You're a peach."

Then she was gone, swiftly as a shadow. Strange girl . . .

I heard the guard's footsteps. I crouched on the floor, the queer weapon in my hand. Melt the bars? Why not kill the guard and snatch the keys? I waited tensely, but the man did not come near the barred windows. The footfalls retreated and a tomb-like silence shrouded my cell.

I gulped the food and the flagon of sweet wine. Hope surged like fire in my

veins. Seizing the weapon, I held it close to the center bar and squeezed the trigger. A piercing red beam shot from the black muzzle. I focused the ray at one end of the bar. The metal smoked and turned crimson. White drops splashed on the stone floor, and I had to step lively. The bar came in two. Then I melted the other end and the red-hot rod fell to the floor with a clatter. I eased up on the trigger. How long would this flame-ray work? I shuddered when I realized what it could do to flesh and bone. Had the guard heard the commotion?

I STUFFED the gun into my overalls and leaped at the two remaining bars. There was room to squeeze between them. I hoisted my legs through and squirmed out upon the floor. No one was in sight. I sneaked along the dim, red corridor, found the door Ala had indicated. It was unlocked. I threw it open—a curtained room, low divans against the frescoed walls. Empty.

I strode across the deep carpet, ray-gun held ready. Cautiously I parted the curtain that led to the next corridor. I saw two armed guards, walking toward me. They would pass the aperture. I slipped the curtain into place and backed against the wall. My legs struck something. A stool! I tottered and fell into the curtain. The men shouted.

I leaped backward and crouched. They smashed into the veil. I ripped the cloth away and fired. The first man screamed and crumpled. Caught off balance, the second guard released a blast. The gauze near my neck flamed and I returned his fire. His white face contorted and he slid to the floor, a great hole scorched in his chest. Blood gushed on the purple carpet. I shuddered. Killing wasn't my game, but . . .

Along the brilliant corridor I ran. So far I had found the place as Ala had described it. Every second counted now.

Soon the dead men would be found, an alarm sounded. I raced on. Suddenly I heard a familiar voice, and I halted, breathing deeply. Red anger engulfed me. That voice was Belton's.

Beyond a curtained doorway the traitor was speaking, in Baravanian. I moved toward the sound and listened.

"... ready in twenty-four hours. I'll return and direct the land and air forces. Our armies are ready to seize the Ukan. You advance from the sea. We'll attack together. Once Russia falls we'll go on! Nothing can stop us!"

The man was mad...

"That is fine," came another voice. Khorlu. "But you cannot have the Secret."

"Why not?" Belton demanded. "Your scientists can make a copy. I promise that Baravania will not use it, but our military authorities should know what you are going to do, and how..."

"No. Years ago, Lennox the Great discovered the Secret of the power over water. But he did not write the formula. He knew it was a dangerous thing. Instead, he told it to two men, who were sworn to silence save at the nation's peril. These men are permitted, by law, to create small water-slaves for our own use. We have made no giant ones for ages. However, since Russia is planning to blow us to bits, I think it wise to attack first. You can do what you like with the land. We don't want it!"

"That's great," Belton grunted. "Who are those two men that possess the knowledge?"

Khorlu laughed, a thin, mocking laugh. "That, too, is a mystery. But never fear; the monsters will be made, and we shall conquer the Ukan. They will frighten the enemy so badly you can march in without firing a shot!"

"You have strange customs, Khorlu."

"Strange, to you, perhaps; but just."

I pressed closer to the curtain.

"None of your people know who the

Guardians are?" Belton inquired, his voice somewhat thick.

"Only a chosen few. And those who know it not are silent about it. Naturally I know— Why are you so interested? I've told you I will never part with that information—"

"You never will?" Belton snarled. "So. I thought as much! Back against that wall. Quick! Now tell me or I'll blast you to hell!"

"Curse you!" Khorlu screamed. "You sneaking skunk!"

"Shut up. Tell me—and hurry! Better yet, write it on a piece of paper. Here. At this desk. Now, damn you, write!"

What to do? Enter now? Belton's gun must be out. I crouched and listened. The scratch of a pen... Khorlu was writing the Secret that would give Baravania a weapon against the world...

I parted the curtain, slowly. Khorlu was poised over a small desk, writing furiously. His captor's back was turned

"Drop that gun!" I barked.

Belton spun. I fired at his hand. The metal weapon burst; he staggered backward. I should have killed him then, but memories of our friendship stabbed me, made me falter. Khorlu bounded to his feet.

"Hold!" I snapped, as his hand snaked toward the slip of paper.

"I'll take that," I said, walking to the desk. I folded the thick vellum and put it in my shirt pocket. The king trembled, his pale face knotted with rage.

STRUGGLE IN THE UNDERWORLD

A CLAMOR sounded in the hall behind me. Guards had found the bodies. Feet raced along the corridor. Khorlu smiled. Belton's face was ashen; he nursed his bleeding hand and swore.

The curtain ripped. I wheeled as Khorlu laughed. I wanted to blast him, but... the doorway belched three armed

men. I burned the foremost. The second guard blazed at the light node on the ceiling. Darkness. . .

I leaped and slid behind a couch. Red beams seared the floor where I had stood an instant before. Bodies thudded about the room; hoarse screams rattled on my ear drums. I saw the doorway, barely visible in the murky darkness, and lunged for it. I caromed into a man. We locked arms and went down, pounding and threshing. My gun was booted from my hand.

"Here he is!" the man cried.

I fought like a demon, but clawed fingers and writhing bodies hammered me to the floor. A spiked boot crushed my right hand. Something struck my head and I went limp. I was conscious, but couldn't move a finger. Deft hands bound my wrists and ankles. Hope dashed. . . I had the Secret, but for how long? My head whirled; my body ached from the terrific mauling. I was dragged across the floor. The lights were on, but I couldn't open my eyes.

Someone cried. "Where is Khorlu? Where is Belton?"

"Look!" shouted another. "There on the floor is the king's cape—"

"He has been carried off!"

"Belton—"

"Take this prisoner—lock him up. I'll sweat that guard later. We go to search for Khorlu!"

I fainted.

AWARENESS returned. Two guards were hustling me along the dim, red corridor that led to the prison. I was weak and dazed, my mangled hand bled and throbbed savagely. One man held me while the other opened a door in the floor. I was pushed to the edge of the pit, hurled downward. The floor crashed into me. My bruised body screamed as I tried to crawl. I lay still, sick with nausea. The guards tramped away. Silence.

Where had Khorlu gone? Had Belton

seized him? I had the Secret. The guards hadn't known about that. Perhaps it wasn't the Secret. Khorlu was tricky. Belton was desperate—no telling what he'd do. Russia planning to attack Altair? They didn't know the place existed, didn't care! Another lie of Belton's.

A tapping on the bars above startled me. I rolled over and groaned as my broken hand slapped the cold stone.

"Jon! Jon!" said a soft voice. "Are you there?"

I grunted.

"Oh! I stole the keys. You must come—quickly!" I heard a faint click; the grate rattled and raised. She lowered the ladder. I wobbled to my knees, giddy and exhausted. My throat burned.

I seized the ladder and climbed, using my left hand. "Ala! You have saved me again!"

She gripped my hand, pulled me out on the floor.

"You are hurt, Jon— But you *must* hurry! Guards are running everywhere. Khorlu is missing. . ."

"How did you know I was here?"

"I took a chance—you never came to the gates." She pressed a ray-gun into my left hand. "Follow me, Jon. I think we can reach the air-locks."

She crossed the hall, touched a spot in the queer, decorated wall. A whirring noise, and a small door appeared! Taking my arm, she led me into a well of blackness. Her flashlight gleamed on a steep, winding stair. We sneaked aloft, swiftly. My head cleared as new hope burned within me. She led on; I thought the steps would never end. I gasped and panted as strength ebbed in a flood.

At last we stood before a door. Ala put her ear to it. Her pale, lovely face was drawn with fear. Poor kid! Her curved lips trembled.

"There is a great commotion at the locks; we cannot go now. Khorlu must be missing still."

"Why didn't you tell me about this stair?" I inquired, admiring her slim, voluptuous figure beneath the gauzy robe.

"You couldn't have opened the secret door—"

"We've got to go," I said. "If you want to save Khorlu. I think Belton abducted him."

"Oh, no!" she cried, her dark eyes flashing. "That would be sacrilege!"

"Belton is mad," I snapped. "He'd do anything to get the Secret. When he found out Khorlu knew, he seized him." I didn't think it wise to mention the slip of paper. . . .

"How did you know this, Jon?"

I told her about the wild episode in Khorlu's chambers.

"That is awful," she said. "Perhaps I should have let you know before . . . Khorlu is my father."

For an instant I was stunned. "Great Lord! Now we've got to find him—"

"Listen—hear the men? They are organizing an expedition out into the sea, to look for my father. He is not in Altair . . . that is what they say."

"I was afraid of that," I said. "But how am I going to get a diving suit with all that going on?"

"We shall have to wait until the men are gone. They will leave a guard, but I think I can go out and get a suit without arousing suspicion."

"That will work," I replied, "if they don't discover you're helping their prisoner escape—"

SHE stood rigidly beside the door, listening. The noises and voices subsided. She turned and clutched my arm.

"I will try—" she whispered. I started to grab her, but she opened the door and went through. I waited, uneasily; no sounds beyond the panels. If they knew— The awful quiet jangled my nerves. I reached for the door; suddenly it burst open. Ala staggered through under the weight of two

suits. I slammed the door and bolted it.

"All is clear, so far," she panted, dropping the gear. Swiftly we donned the suits. They were light but durable, more seaworthy than any diving suits I had ever seen—no cables or air hoses, condensed oxygen; unique sponges to absorb waste gases. Ingenious. Once the helmets were screwed in place, I was startled by Ala's voice. The suits had radio hook-ups!

"Follow me, Jon, and do what I do. We are joining the expedition to search for Khorlu. Only your eyes are visible—you should not be recognized. When we get beyond the gates, watch your chance and head for the surface. Remember the small island. You can make that easily."

"Ala," I stammered. "I hate to leave you—like this. Let me help search for your father. If they find out you helped me, you'll be killed for treason—"

"Perhaps," her soft voice replied. "I—won't leave you, Jon, if you don't want me to—"

"Ala, darling—" I gripped her shoulders and wished I'd come to my senses sooner. Now we were in suits. . . . I opened the door.

We walked boldly into a wide, familiar corridor. Two helmeted guards eyed us suspiciously. I tried to move without limping. My gun was back there, behind that door. Having it might spoil our chances of escape. . . . And the red-ray guns were useless in water.

Ala crossed the floor, approached the airlocks and pressed a button that sprouted from a decorated switchboard. The huge, transparent door lifted. We slipped into the narrow compartment between it and the gate that held back the sea. The panel behind us lowered, operated, I guessed, by a timed, automatic device. Would the guards get wise? I dared not look at them. I adjusted my gear as water gushed from vents in the floor. Soon it covered us. Ala looked at me, and her dark eyes seemed to smile.

I glanced at the suited guards beyond the

door. They had come very near, but the churning water made them mere blurred shadows. The chamber filled and the water quieted. The guards watched me closely. One of them leaped forward; pointed at my right arm. I looked down—a red stain on the rubber suit. I'd been careless putting it on. Ala, too, had seen.

One man sprang to the controls. The second gate lifted two feet—and stopped. Ala touched my arm, and we dove at the crack. I pushed her through, but not all the way. She wouldn't budge from beneath the heavy jamb.

"Hurry, Jon!" her strained voice rang in my ear-phones.

The gate inched downward, stopped again. They saw her lying under the gate. Would they lower it—on the princess? I snatched her hand, but the obstinate little fool wouldn't budge. Risking her life to save me. . . .

I crawled under the portal. Suddenly it moved—down. They were going to do it! I seized her arms; dragged her through. Her right foot caught. Barely six inches left . . . I gave a mighty tug. Her metal-shod foot came free, but a small rip appeared in the rubber at her ankle!

Ala gripped her leg, tried to hold back the water. I found a small rope at my belt, and swiftly tied it below her knee, above the break. It might hold. . . . Her eyes seemed to mirror fear and pain. She stood, slowly; raised her arms, and made strange motions in the water.

The guards were emptying the lock. They were following. I seized her arm and pulled her along the corridor.

SUDDENLY the water near me moved, as if alive! No currents here—we had not passed the second door. . . . A mighty, invisible claw gripped me, lifted Ala from the floor. We were hurled along the sea-great tunnel. The huge door ahead opened as if a great hand had struck it. We flew on into blackness. The dark stair swirled

beneath us; the ocean floor. . . . What dark power was this?

We swept upward in the clutch of that monster. Water monster? Great God! Was this the thing Belton sought? Ala the other Guardian? No time to marvel or speculate further. It happened too quickly.

We were thrown on a sandy beach. I gasped. Coming upward so swiftly we'd have the "bends" for certain. . . . But I was able to move.

"Ala! Are you all right?"

No answer in my phones. I clambered to my feet. She lay very still, eyes closed. I unscrewed her helmet, ripped away the suit. I lifted her and carried her to dry sand. She was soaked; water ran from her nose and mouth. Her pale, lovely face was blue. . . .

I turned her over, gently, and gave her artificial respiration. I worked for long, agonizing moments. She quivered and coughed, spat pink water. She gulped air. The poor girl was suffering terribly.

"Ala," I cried. "Are you better—are you—"

Her eyelids fluttered and opened. She tried to smile. Brave darling! I held her hands and realized suddenly that my suit was still on! I scrambled out of it, and the cold struck me like a knife. No wonder her face was blue! Three days in that heated madland had made me soft. The sun was setting. On the tiny island grew shrubs and stunted trees. I must build a fire. . . .

Above the wash of the surf, a voice cracked. "Hold it, Huffmann! You're covered."

I turned. Belton! His round, sallow face puckered into a grin.

"Damn your black heart!" I screamed. "If it hadn't been for you—"

He laughed. "Take it easy, Jon. All I want is that slip of paper. Then I can turn old Khorlu loose—if he ever wakes up. I got him back on the island."

"To hell with you!" I snarled.

His ray-gun came nearer, as a sneer twisted his whiskered face. "Listen, Huff, I want that paper, and I don't care how I get it. Hand it over!"

I prayed for a chance to fight. Ala had fallen unconscious again. Belton advanced, smiling. I lunged.

HIS gun jerked up—but no blast scorched me. A click. The thing was dead. I smashed a left to his jaw that sent him spinning. He crouched and tackled. I ducked and caught his wrist. I knew I had to use a trick; my right hand was useless. We went down, and I twisted his arm as we rolled in the sand. He wrenched free, smashed me in the mouth. I was weak—couldn't last long.

He held me down, his fists jabbing my jaw. I twisted and seized his arm. He broke the hold and hammered me again. I was sinking. . . .

Suddenly Ala screamed. Belton quit pounding as the roar of water seemed to bear down upon us. He cursed and jumped away. I rolled and opened my eyes.

A great wave cascaded around me, washing over Belton and Ala! It was more than a wave—a monstrous column of pale sea-

green that rippled across the sand like a huge snake. It writhed near me, but did not touch me; then it slithered toward the pounding surf. In that mountain of water were Ala, Khorlu and Belton!

"Ala! Ala!" I screamed as the tentacle parted the waves. I had a last glimpse of the curious trio before the sea claimed them. And I thought I saw Ala lift her hand. . . . Then they were gone. The ocean near the beach heaved and whirled strangely, and the green waves rolled across the sand, as they had rolled for ages.

Khorlu had awakened on the island, and had returned for revenge!

The following day a whaling ship out of Sebastopol sighted my crude flag and took me aboard. Later, I made my way to America on a tramp steamer.

As I said at the beginning, no one will believe my story—not that it matters, really, for Belton's mad dreams of empire are vanished, and the world is safe from that watery horror, and the Kingdom of Altair. Is Ala dead, or still living in that lost empire beneath Khersoness? Some day, perhaps, I shall try to return, but deep in my heart I know that I shall never see her again.

IN THE JULY ISSUE OF

SUPER SPORTS

**THERE IS A TOP-NOTCH ARRAY OF
STORIES BY THE BEST AUTHORS**

DIAMOND DAZZLER

by Bud Nelson

KEYSTONE DOUBLE-CROSS

by Earl Campbell

GUTS AND A RACQUET

by C. J. Rocklin

THE CINDER EATER

by W. H. Temple

AND MANY OTHERS . . . NOW ON SALE!!!

LETTERS FROM READERS

You are invited to send your letters of comment upon FUTURE FICTION and science-fiction in general, for publication in this department, to FUTURE FICTION, 60 Hudson Street, New York, N. Y.

Dear Reader:

As this department is being compiled, the March issue of the magazine has not as yet circulated around the country—and therefore, the title for this feature, to be chosen from among your suggestions, has not been received to date. Therefore, it is still "Letters from Readers." However, we hope to have a really good name for our readers' corner, in the next number of FUTURE FICTION.

I hope that you like the way the book is being run—but whether you do or whether you don't, I want to hear from you. I depend upon your letters to guide the future of FUTURE FICTION, so please don't neglect me.

Do you like the line-up of authors on our staff? Do you like the departments, articles, and features? How about the illustrating? Suppose you sit down right now and jot out a note to your old Editor—what say? And I want to know what you think of science-fiction in general—why you read it, and your experiences with it.

Before we dive into the letter chest for a few choice bits to publish, I'd like to make a brief mention of SCIENCE FICTION. It's our companion book, you know—along the same lines as FUTURE FICTION, but with more and larger departments—also featuring a cover by Frank R. Paul. Look for it the next time you pass a newsstand! Those of you who clamor for monthly publication can satisfy yourselves with SCIENCE FICTION during those months between issues of FUTURE FICTION! Read 'em both!

CHARLES D. HORNIG, Editor,
FUTURE FICTION.
60 Hudson Street, New York City.

P.S. In case that article in the last number, "Esperanto—Peace to the World!" has aroused your interest in the easy, practical world-tongue, Esperanto—you can get full details about how to learn the language and its value to humanity, by writing to

Joseph H. Leahy, General Secretary, Esperanto Association of North America, 1410 H Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. Also, a fine correspondence course is offered by Esperanto-by-Mail, St. Albans, N. Y.

LIKES HUMAN INTEREST

Dear Mr. Hornig:

I have just finished reading the first issue of your FUTURE FICTION magazine with considerable satisfaction.

I especially liked the definite note of human interest that runs through each of the stories. But guard against one thing. Sex and human interest are two different things. A good love interest is an asset to any story, but sex just has no place in a science-fiction magazine. The next to the last paragraph of "World Reborn" practically spoiled a good story for me. The cover is bad. Though well-drawn and harmonizingly colored, nudity is out in any magazine I care to read.

And I still don't like science-fiction novels in a magazine. Most of them are just dragged out short stories, although "World Reborn" isn't bad at all. But why not have a long novel in one of your magazines with a couple of short stories and the other magazine devoted entirely to short novelets and short stories? Why not put this up to a vote of your readers?

"The Disappearing Papers" is the best story in the magazine and the best short I have read in any science-fiction magazine.

I hope the next issue is just as good, though devoted entirely to short stories.

F. E. HARDART.
P. O. Box 1088, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

(I agree with you that sex and love interest are two different things, and I try to keep all sex out of the stories. As for the cover girls on them seem to help the news-stand sales, which is the publisher's first concern (What you have really said about novels is that you don't like those that aren't good

—but you did like "World Reborn" and I hope you like the current one. In selecting stories, I give length very little consideration—quality is the thing. I have lengths changed only when I feel that the interest of the story can be increased thereby.—EDITOR.)

SCIENCE FICTION CAME TRUE!

Dear Mr. Hornig:

Don't feel in the mood to try for a cover painting, but will make a few comments on your new magazine regardless. It's good, much better, for instance, than the first SCIENCE FICTION.

The name, FUTURE FICTION, sounds familiar. After a few moments I remembered. It was used in the story, "The End of Time," in the first issue of the old Wonder under your editorship. Just another case of science-fiction coming true!

Best story is Haggard's "World Reborn." Almost a classic in spite of the science. I haven't figured out exactly how many tons of meteors would be needed to disturb the ionization layer, even if it could be done that way, but it must be considerably greater than any comet could carry.

The other stories aren't bad, "The Infinite Eye" and Breuer's short-short being specially good.

The main faults in this issue were weak science and poorly handled love interest. For the benefit of the "to h— with science, we want the story" school, I might add that I, too, read for pleasure, but to me, a falsely laid scientific background destroys the plausibility of the story, and lessens the enjoyment thereof.

LYNN BRIDGES.

7736 Whittaker, Detroit, Mich.

(I'm glad you liked the magazine as a whole, and I'll try to be more careful about the science in the stories, in the future. At the same time, I hope that you'll remember the poetic license that is due authors of fantastic stories.—EDITOR.)

A SCIENCE FICTION LASS

Dear Editor:

I have just got through reading "La Femme in Science-Fiction." Always glad to oblige! I am by no means a new-comer. Fact is, I'm a dyed-in-the-wool, veteran science-fiction reader.

Now let's see, what is it you want to

know? Oh yes! You want to know why I am a fan. H'mmmm—that'll take pretty deep thinking. Well, the stories are so utterly different from reality. That is the chief fascination they hold for me. Then I like the readers' department, especially when the editor answers letters. It's so palsy-walsy. Now you want to know what it means to me. It means several hours of pure joy with the future anticipation of writing a fan letter. There!—will that hold you for a while?

Would you, dear editor, tell me what you have to know or what you have to do, to break into the writing world??? I want, so badly, to be a writer—the variety that get paid for their work. I've written many manuscripts but only sent in two. I guess I am too easily disgusted. The kind of stories that come most easily to me (I could make up two or three a day, if I set my mind to it) are of all things, "airplane stories." I can think up plots galore for them. I tried to write a science-fiction story, but I don't know enough science for that. I started one about a man with super-microscopic eyes and the way things appeared to him, but I got the mental picture of the editor looking it over, shaking his head sadly at such wasted energy, getting out the inevitable rejection slip—well, I tore it up, so there!

Dear Eddy (short for editor), I just found two untyped manuscripts of mine, just done a few days ago, entitled "Before the World Began" and "The First Space Voyage," also an airplane story, "The Haunted Patrol." I'm allergic to editors.

VIDA CLAIRE SCHNEIDER.

117 N. Terrace Ave.,
Mount Vernon, N. Y.

(Letters from our feminine fans are always doubly welcome, not only because they keep the department from becoming "stag"nant, but also because they disprove the old theory that not many girls read science-fiction. Since I asked for letters from girls, an astonishing number of them has been received.

The best way to become a writer is to write. That's very old advice, but the best. Just write and write and write—considering the criticisms of those who read your material and making suggested changes in your style. Then, if you have any talent at all for writing, you will one day find your material being accepted and published.

Some of the very best authors today wrote many dozens of stories before they had their first acceptance.

So, if you really want to write, just stick to it, don't get discouraged at rejections, and have plenty of patience!—EDITOR.)

THUMBS DOWN ON THE QUIZ

Dear Editor:

Your first four issues of *SCIENCE FICTION* are dandy—also the first issue of *FUTURE FICTION*, which is swell, and I am enclosing my subscription for *FUTURE FICTION* for one year. I'm unable to get it at the local newsstands (four of them in this town), but am able to get *SCIENCE FICTION*.

All of the stories are fine. Let's have more interplanetary stories, and less of weird and supernatural types. When are you going to go "monthly"?

Your present line of authors is fine, except that you haven't enough stories by Manly Wade Wellman, or Ray Cummings, A. Merritt, Donald Wandrei, Eando Binder, Robert Bloch, Stanton A. Coblentz, and a dozen or so more.

Please don't start a Science Quiz, like several other magazines have. The room they take up is just wasted. Instead, why don't you have a few pages devoted to questions and answers? I believe this would be just dandy.

Continued success to *SCIENCE FICTION* and *FUTURE FICTION*!

CLIFFORD ANDRESEN.

204 N. Locust St., Anamosa, Iowa.

(Thanks for your suggestions. You will find a science controversy department in our sister publication, *SCIENCE FICTION*. Fans, how would you like a Science Questions and Answers feature in *FUTURE FICTION*, such as Mr. Andresen suggests?

Any newsstand in the country can secure *FUTURE FICTION* for you, upon request.

Many of the authors you list among your favorites are already writing for us. Look for more of their work in the future.—EDITOR.)

HOW TO SCARE CHILDREN!

Dear Sir:

I am writing concerning your marvelous offer of a free cover painting for the best letter commenting on your magazine. I

wonder if you have looked at that first cover of yours? What would you do with it if you won it? Possibly you could use it to scare the neighbor's children or perhaps you might ask Dali to interpret it for you.

Personally, I think you'd have a very guilty look on your smug face if you found the cover in your mail. You'd sneak it into your pocket and repair to some place where you could destroy it completely, and yet you have the nerve or stupidity to offer it to us free. Of course, I don't think that you are stupid. I am seriously thinking of seeing about obtaining insurance against the possibility of ever seeing your "free" cover painting in my mail. I am young and strong, but the shock might make me a raving lunatic. Horrors!—I might even descend to your level! I hope that you have gathered that I don't want your "free" cover-painting under any conditions whatsoever. Incidentally, I have speculated long as to what kind of a creature had such a perverted outlook to produce that cover. I sympathize heartily with this Scott person (assuming it is a person).

I only hope this cover contest will go over as smoothly as did your contest in *SCIENCE FICTION* magazine. That was truly a wonderful affair. I remember writing furiously last January to enter your contest which "must be in the editorial offices by Friday, January 27, 1939." I remember how enthusiastic I was about the new magazine. I wrote an essay that didn't have a chance, but the point is that I was one of the poor ignorant saps that did write, but I'm fooling you this time—sure, I'm writing, but I'm not trying to break any deadline or enter any contest.

Now in regards to *FUTURE FICTION*—all of the stories were satisfactory, but not outstanding—but OH, that cover!

I think I'll close now, as I've said more than I meant to. Anyhow, I don't suppose you're still with me. You still have possibilities.

DAVE SLITT.

581 William St., London, Ont., Canada.

(Sorry, but I'll have to bust up one of your theories regarding the cover of the first *FUTURE FICTION*. I just took a copy of the magazine out of the house—I'm writing this department at home—and thrust it suddenly in front of twelve of the neighbors' children, and not even one

showed signs of fright. Four of them laughed, though, and one even tried to lick the paint off the cover. The rest have promised to become avid science-fiction fans when they grow up.

O. K., if that's the way you feel, I WON'T send you the November cover—but your letter might easily have won it!

All I can see on our copy of the November cover is a man shooting a death ray at a couple of Martians, to protect a girl in a test-tube—nothing to be afraid of, unless you happen to be one of the Martians.

Pulp magazines are prepared months before publication, and therefore the results of contests must appear some time after the contests close. But results there always shall be!

Anyway, I'm glad that you liked the contents of the magazine, even though the cover horrified you. There may be others like you who exclaimed "Great Scott!" when they saw the cover, but we hope there are many more who cried "Great, Scott!" in praise of the artist!—EDITOR.)

WANTS SCIENCE IN STORIES

Dear Sir:

When I read science-fiction, I do not want anything weird or fantastic such as is found in some magazines. A science-fiction magazine, of course, must have ideas that are new, but why not ones in line with some scientific fact or ones that can have an explanation?—not stories about mummies and others that should be in ancient adventure magazines.

Another thing that makes science-fiction stories interesting is a humorous one now and then. I like natural characters, not super-human ones.

Stories of space-travel are fine too. They bolster our adventurous spirit, and furthermore, many rocket experiments are being made now.

A writer in composing his story about some new machine should make his machinery seem possible.

RICHARD E. HOLDEN.

1918 Walker Ave., Houston, Texas.

(You seem to be among that huge classification of science-fiction fans that prefers a big slice of science with each story. We try to satisfy this desire, as well as that of the readers who like strong fantasy. Of course, we make every attempt to see

that every story has a good, logical scientific basis.—EDITOR.)

ANOTHER GIRL READER

Dear Mr. Hornig:

This is my first attempt to write to a department of this sort. I have been reading science-fiction for five years and find your magazine to be one of the best.

Although I am only a young girl, I am deeply interested in this sort of literature. I like stories that widen the scope of your imagination—stories like "Swordsmen of Saturn" and "Where Eternity Ends."

Science-fiction stories have helped me a lot. They have given me a different view on various things.

Would I be too bold in suggesting that you get a little more of our sex into your stories? I don't mean to clutter a story up with too much love interest, but I would like to see the women in a better role than the bit parts they usually get. Or must the glory all belong to the male sex?

I wish you lots of luck in keeping up the good work.

KAY GEE,

Wellsboro, Penna.

(Here is another of those girl-fans who have hidden their torches under a bushel for years, allowing the haughty males to think that they alone appreciated science-fiction! But they are at last making themselves known. Both the Los Angeles and Queens Science Fiction Clubs boast several girl members apiece, and I understand that there are now two all-girl science-fiction fan magazines! Viva la femme!

During the past decade there has been a number of excellent science-fiction stories in which women were the "heroes." Love interest should be kept subordinate to the fantasy of a science-fiction story, but it often lends reality to characterization. We have no objection to it, when properly handled.—EDITOR.)

THE CROWDED MARKET

Dear Sir:

In a way, I am glad you found it advisable to publish a companion magazine, and FUTURE FICTION is a fine title; I've liked the name ever since reading Fedor and Hassé's "End of Tyme" in the old Wonder. But there are already many sci-

ence-fiction magazines on the market—too many, judging from the abrupt demise of one of them—you are taking a chance. When I say this, I mean that the readers as well as the publishers have something at stake. Science-fiction publishers are going nuts with the idea of publishing twin magazines, both bi-monthlies, when it would seem a whole lot more sensible to bring out one good monthly instead. Many current science-fiction magazines need plenty of improvement—SCIENCE FICTION included.

Perhaps I'm griping because I spent a whole month running around in a vain search for the hypothetical September number. It was a dirty trick to announce monthly publication, and then change your mind and put out a companion instead. Anyway, I wish you luck with FUTURE FICTION.

LOUIS GOLDSTONE, JR.,
622 Presidio Ave., San Francisco, Calif.

(We find that it is better to publish two bi-monthly magazines, alternating months, than one monthly publication. In the first place, the more science-fiction magazines on the newsstands, the greater attention they receive from the casual newsstand glancer. There's power in numbers, you know. Secondly, it provides the fans with two magazine personalities instead of one, and it doesn't cost them any more—different sets of departments, artwork, etc.—EDITOR.)

SCIENCE FICTION IN SCHOOL

Dear Charlie:

Having grazed among the richest of science-fiction pastures ever since I was old enough to pry apart the pages of a pulp magazine, I was totally unprepared for the hardships I was to endure upon moving into the land of grits and corn-bread. I looked into every newsstand, every drug store, and even considered entering the public library (perish the thought!) in search of my elixir of life, but all to no avail; science-fiction simply did not exist.

Then one day, while half-heartedly browsing among the pulp of a corner newsstand, I glimpsed a light! A LIGHT! There blazing its cheery luminescence from the top-most row was your beloved SCIENCE FICTION. With tears of gratitude

flooding my face, I clutched it to my breast, and giddy with relief, staggered homeward, that I might devour every last morsel.

There you have a story that should touch the flintiest of science-fiction hearts, and bring their wrath blazing downward on the heads of haplessly ignorant newsstand proprietors.

Now that my tale of woe is complete, I'd like to temper my gratitude with a few suggestions concerning your magazine. First, I believe that every fan is interested in the progress of science, and many of us would be surprised how nearly science has approached our farthest flights of imagination. In consequence, at least one short article dealing with the advances of science in relation to atomic power, astronomy, rocketry, and many other fields, would be appreciated.

I am surprised that no one, at least to my knowledge, has mentioned that science-fiction stories are a prime source of elementary science. In taking several science-courses in school, I find that as a result of reading science-fiction stories and the articles that often accompany them, I have a more complete understanding of many facts and remember them much better as a result of the interesting way in which they are presented.

In general, I have a great deal more I'd like to say in regard to science-fiction but since this letter has already reached a length unsatisfactory for publication, I'll cut it short.

HAROLD LAWLESS,
3905 Club Drive, Atlanta, Ga.

(This is a sample of the type of letter appearing in our companion book, SCIENCE FICTION.)

Your enthusiastic reception of our effort is indeed flattering. I hope you will continue to be an avid reader of both SCIENCE FICTION and FUTURE FICTION.

We try to include at least one science article in every issue, but it is sometimes crowded out. As for science-fiction in school, I know it has helped a great many high school and college students through their science courses. The sugar-coated method of feeding science via science-fiction makes it easy to take.—EDITOR.)



The Magnificent Possession

by ISAAC ASIMOV

Walter Sills labored for years as an unknown laboratory worker—but at fifty he makes his great discovery! Fame, riches are to be his fate—until interference looms up in the form of a few unlikeable characters — and Nature herself!

WALTER SILLS reflected now, as he had reflected often before, that life was hard and joyless. He surveyed his dingy chemical laboratory and grinned cynically—working in a dirty hole of a place, living on occasional ore analyses that barely paid for absolutely in-

dispensable equipment, while others, not half his worth perhaps, were working for big industrial concerns and taking life easy.

He looked out the window at the Hudson River, ruddied in the flame of the dying sun, and wondered moodily whether these last experiments would finally bring

him the fame and success he was after, or if they were merely some more false alarms.

The unlocked door creaked open a crack and the cheerful face of Eugene Taylor burst into view. Sills waved and Taylor's body followed his head and entered the laboratory.

"Hello, old soak," came the loud and carefree hail. "How go things?"

Sills shook his head at the other's exuberance. "I wish I had your foolish outlook on life, Gene. For your information, things are bad. I need money, and the more I need it, the less I have."

"Well, I haven't any money either, have I?" demanded Taylor. "But why worry about it? You're fifty, and worry hasn't got you anything except a bald head. I'm thirty, and I want to keep my beautiful brown hair."

The chemist grinned. "I'll get my money, yet, Gene. Just leave it to me."

"Your new ideas shaping out well?"

"Are they? I haven't told you much about it, have I? Well, come here and I'll show you what progress I've made."

Taylor followed Sills to a small table, on which stood a rack of test-tubes, in one of which was about half an inch of a shiny metallic substance.

"Sodium-mercury mixture, or sodium amalgam, as it is called," explained Sills pointing to it.

He took a bottle labeled "Ammonium Chloride Sol." from the shelf and poured a little into the tube. Immediately the sodium amalgam began changing into a loosely-packed, spongy substance.

"That," observed Sills, "is ammonium amalgam. The ammonium radical (NH_4) acts as a metal here and combines with mercury." He waited for the action to go to completion and then poured off the supernatant liquid.

"Ammonium amalgam isn't very stable," he informed Taylor, "so I'll have to work fast." He grasped a flask of straw-colored, pleasant-smelling liquid and filled the test-

tube with it. Upon shaking, the loosely-packed ammonium amalgam vanished and in its stead a small drop of metallic liquid rolled about the bottom.

Taylor gazed at the test-tube, open-mouthed. "What happened?"

"This liquid is a complex derivative of Hydrazine which I've discovered and named Ammonaline. I haven't worked out its formula yet, but that doesn't matter. The point about it is that it has the property of dissolving the ammonium out of the amalgam. Those few drops at the bottom are pure mercury; the ammonium is in solution."

Taylor remained unresponsive and Sills waxed enthusiastic. "Don't you see the implications? I've gone half way towards isolating pure ammonium, a thing which has never been done before! Once accomplished it means fame, success, the Nobel Prize, and who knows what else."

"Wow!" Taylor's gaze became more respectful. "That yellow stuff doesn't look so important to me." He snatched for it, but Sills withheld it.

"I haven't finished by any means, Gene. I've got to get it in its free metallic state, and I can't do that so far. Every time I try to evaporate the Ammonaline, the ammonium breaks down to everlasting ammonia and hydrogen. . . . But I'll get it—I'll get it!"

TWO weeks later, the epilogue to the previous scene was enacted. Taylor received a hurried and emphatic call from his chemist friend and appeared at the laboratory in a flurry of anticipation.

"You've got it?"

"I've got it—and it's bigger than I thought! There's millions in it, really," Sills' eyes shown with rapture.

"I've been working from the wrong angle up to now," he explained. "Heating the solvent always broke down the dissolved ammonium, so I separated it out by freezing. It works the same way as brine, which,

when frozen slowly, freezes into fresh ice, the salt crystallizing out. Luckily, the Ammonaline freezes at 18 degrees Centigrade and doesn't require much cooling."

He pointed dramatically to a small beaker, inside a glass-walled case. The beaker contained pale, straw-colored, needle-like crystals and covering the top of this, a thin layer of a dullish, yellow substance.

"Why the case?" asked Taylor.

"I've got it filled with argon to keep the ammonium (which is the yellow substance on top of the Ammonaline) pure. It is so active that it will react with anything else but a helium-type gas."

Taylor marveled and pounded his complacently-smiling friend on the back.

"Wait, Gene, the best is yet to come."

Taylor was led to the other end of the room and Sills' trembling finger pointed out another airtight case containing a lump of metal of a gleaming yellow that sparkled and glistened.

"That, my friend, is ammonium oxide, (NH_4O), formed by passing *absolutely dry* air over free ammonium metal. It is perfectly inert (the sealed case contains quite a bit of chlorine, for instance, and yet there is no reaction). It can be made as cheaply as aluminum, if not more so, and yet it looks more like gold than gold does itself. Do you see the possibilities?"

"Do I?" exploded Taylor. "It will sweep the country. You can have ammonium jewelry, and ammonium-plated table-ware, and a million other things. Then again, who knows how many countless industrial applications it may have? You're rich, Walt—you're rich!"

"We're rich," corrected Sills gently. He moved towards the telephone, "The newspapers are going to hear of this. I'm going to begin to cash in on fame right now."

Taylor frowned, "Maybe you'd better keep it a secret, Walt."

"Oh, I'm not breathing a hint as to the process. I'll just give them the general

idea. Besides, we're safe; the patent application is in Washington right now."

But Sills was wrong! The article in the paper ushered in a very, very hectic two days for the two of them.

J THROGMORTON BANKHEAD is what is commonly known as a "captain of industry." As head of the Acme Chromium and Silver Plating Corporation, he no doubt deserved the title; but to his patient and long-suffering wife, he was merely a dyspeptic and grouchy husband, especially at the breakfast table . . . and he was at the breakfast table now.

Rustling his morning paper angrily, he sputtered between bites of buttered toast, "This man is ruining the country." He pointed aghast at big, black headlines. "I said before and I'll say again that the man is as crazy as a bedbug. He won't be satisfied. . . ."

"Joseph, please," pleaded his wife, "you're getting purple in the face. Remember your high blood pressure. You know the doctor told you to stop reading the news from Washington if it annoys you so. Now, listen dear, about the cook. She's. . . ."

"The doctor's a damn fool, and so are you," shouted J. Throgmorton Bankhead. "I'll read all the news I please and get purple in the face too, if I want to."

He raised the cup of coffee to his mouth and took a critical sip. While he did so, his eyes fell upon a more insignificant headline towards the bottom of the page: "Savant Discovers Gold Substitute."

THE coffee cup remained in the air while he scanned the article quickly. "This new metal," it ran in part, "is claimed by its discoverer to be far superior to chromium, nickel, or silver for plating purposes, besides being ideal material for cheap and beautiful jewelry. 'The twenty-dollar-a-week clerk,' said Professor Sills, 'will eat off ammonium plate more impressive in ap-

pearance than the gold plate of the Indian Nabob.' There is no. . ."

But J. Throgmorton Bankhead had stopped reading. Visions of a ruined Acme Chromium and Silver Plating Corporation danced before his eyes; and as they danced, the cup of coffee dropped from his hand, and splashed hot liquid over his trousers.

His wife rose to her feet in alarm, "What is it, Joseph; what is it?"

"Nothing," Bankhead shouted. "Nothing For God's sake, go away, will you?"

He strode angrily out of the room, leaving his wife to search the paper in vain for anything that could have disturbed him.

"Bob's Tavern" on Fifteenth Street is usually pretty well filled at all times, but on the morning we are speaking of, it was empty except for four or five rather poorly-dressed men, who clustered about the portly and dignified form of Peter Q. Hornswoggle, eminent ex-Congressman.

Peter Q. Hornswoggle was, as usual, speaking fluently. His subject, again as usual, concerned the life of a Congressman.

"I remember a case in point," he was saying, "when that same argument was brought up in the house, and which I answered as follows: 'The eminent gentleman from Nevada in his statements overlooks one very important aspect of the problem. He does not realize that it is to the interest of the entire nation that the apple-parers of this country be attended to promptly; for, gentlemen, on the welfare of the apple-parers depends the future of the entire fruit industry and on the fruit-industry is based the entire economy of this great and glorious nation, the United States of America.'"

Hornswoggle paused, swallowed half a pint of beer at once, and then smiled in triumph, "I have no hesitation in saying, gentlemen, that at that statement, the entire House burst into wild and tumultuous applause."

One of the assembled listeners shook his head slowly and marvelled. "It must

be great to be able to spiel like that, Senator. You musta been a sensation."

"Yeah," agreed the bartender, "it's a dirty shame you were beat last election."

The ex-Congressman winced and in a very dignified tone began, "I have been reliably informed that the use of bribery in that campaign reached unprecedented prop. . ." His voice died away suddenly as he caught sight of a certain article in the newspaper of one of his listeners. He snatched at it and read it through in silence and thereupon his eyes gleamed with a sudden idea.

"My friends," he said turning to them again, "I find I must leave you. There is pressing work that must be done immediately at City Hall." He leant over to whisper to the bar-keeper, "You haven't got twenty-five cents, have you? I find I left my wallet in the Mayor's office by mistake. I will surely repay you tomorrow."

Clutching the quarter, reluctantly given, Peter Q. Hornswoggle left.

IN a small and dimly lit room somewhere in the lower reaches of First Avenue, Michael Maguire, known to the police by the far more euphonious name of Mike the Slug, cleaned his trusty revolver and hummed a tuneless song. The door opened a crack and Mike looked up.

"That you, Slappy?"

"Yeh," a short, wizened person sidled in, "I brung ya de evenin' sheet. De cops are still tinkin' Bragoni pulled de job."

"Yeh? That's good." He bent unconcernedly over the revolver. "Anything else doing?"

"Naw! Some dippy dame killed herself, but dat's all."

He tossed the newspaper to Mike and left. Mike leaned back and flipped the pages in a bored manner.

A headline attracted his eye and he read the short article that followed. Having finished, he threw aside the paper, lit a

cigarette, and did some heavy thinking. Then he opened the door.

"Hey, Slappy, c'mere. There's a job that's got to be done."

A NIGHT OF TROUBLE

WALTER SILLS was happy, deliriously so. He walked about his laboratory king of all he surveyed, strutting like a peacock, basking in his new-found glory. Eugene Taylor sat and watched him, scarcely less happy himself.

"How does it feel to be famous?" Taylor wanted to know.

"Like a million dollars; and that's what I'm going to sell the secret of ammonium metal for. It's the fat of the land for me from now on."

"You leave the practical details to me, Walt. I'm getting in touch with Staples of Eagle Steel today. You'll get a decent price from him."

The bell rang, and Sills jumped. He ran to open the door.

"Is this the home of Walter Sills?" The large, scowling visitor gazed about him superciliously.

"Yes, I'm Sills. Do you wish to see me?"

"Yes. My name is J. Throgmorton Bankhead and I represent the Acme Chromium and Silver Plating Corporation. I would like to have a moment's discussion with you."

"Come right in. Come right in! This is Eugene Taylor, my associate. You may speak freely before him."

"Very well," Bankhead seated himself heavily. "I suppose you surmise the reason for my visit."

"I take it that you have read of the new ammonium metal in the papers."

"That's right. I have come to see whether there is any truth in the story and to buy your process if there is."

"You can see for yourself, sir," Sills led the magnate to where the argon-filled container of the few grams of pure ammonium

were. "That is the metal. Over here to the right, I've got the oxide, an oxide which is more metallic than the metal itself, strangely enough. It is the oxide that is what the papers call 'substitute gold.'"

Bankhead's face showed not an atom of the sinking feeling within him as he viewed the oxide with dismay. "Take it out in the open," he said, "and let's see it."

Sills shook his head. "I can't, Mr. Bankhead. Those are the first samples of ammonium and ammonium-oxide that ever existed. They're museum pieces. I can easily make more for you, if you wish."

"You'll have to, if you expect me to sink my money in it. You satisfy me and I'll be willing to buy your patent for as much as—oh, say a thousand dollars."

"A thousand dollars!" exclaimed Sills and Taylor together.

"A very fair price, gentlemen."

"A million would be more like it," shouted Taylor in an outraged tone. "This discovery is a goldmine."

"A MILLION, indeed! You are dreaming, gentlemen. The fact of the matter is that my company has been on the track of ammonium for years now, and we are just at the point of solving the problem. Unfortunately you beat us by a week or so, and so I wish to buy up your patent in order to save my company a great deal of annoyance. You realize, of course, that if you refuse my price, I could just go ahead and manufacture the metal, using my own process."

"We'll sue if you do," said Taylor.

"Have you got the money for a long, protracted—and expensive—lawsuit?" Bankhead smiled nastily. "I have, you know. To prove, however, that I am not unreasonable, I will make the price two thousand."

"You've heard our price," answered Taylor stonily, "and we have nothing further to say."

"All right, gentlemen," Bankhead walked

towards the door, "think it over. You'll see it my way, I'm sure."

He opened the door and revealed the symmetrical form of Peter Q. Hornswoggle bent in rapt concentration at the keyhole. Bankhead sneered audibly and the ex-Congressman jumped to his feet in consternation, bowing rapidly two or three times, for want of anything better to do.

The financier passed by disdainfully and Hornswoggle entered, slammed the door behind him, and faced the two bewildered friends.

"That man, my dear sirs, is a malefactor of great wealth, an economic royalist. He is the type of predatory interest that is the ruination of this country. You did quite right in refusing his offer." He placed his hand on his ample chest and smiled at them benignantly.

"Who the devil are you?" rasped Taylor, suddenly recovering from his initial surprise.

"I?" Hornswoggle was taken aback. "Why—er—I am Peter Quintus Hornswoggle. Surely, you know me. I was in the House of Representatives last year."

"Never heard of you. What do you want?"

"Why, bless me! I read in the papers of your wonderful discovery and have come to place my services at your feet."

"What services?"

"Well, after all, you two are not men of the world. With your new invention, you are prey for every self-seeking unscrupulous person that comes along—like Bankhead, for instance. Now, a practical man of affairs, such as I, one with experience of the world, would be of inestimable use to you. I could handle your affairs, attend to details, see that—"

"All for nothing, of course, eh?" Taylor asked, sardonically.

Hornswoggle coughed convulsively. "Well, naturally, I thought that a small interest in your discovery might fittingly be assigned to me."

Sills, who had remained silent during all

this, rose to his feet suddenly. "Get out of here! Did you hear me? Get out, before I call the police."

"Now, Professor Sills, pray don't get excited," Hornswoggle retreated uneasily towards the door which Taylor held open for him. He passed out still protesting, and swore softly to himself when the door slammed in his face.

Sills sank wearily into the nearest chair. "What are we to do, Gene? He offers only two thousand. A week ago that would have been beyond anything I could have hoped for, but now—"

"Forget it. The fellow was only bluffing. Listen, I'm going right now to call on Staples. We'll sell to him for what we can get (it ought to be plenty) and then if there's any trouble with Bankhead—well, that's Staples' worry." He patted the other on the shoulder. "Our troubles are practically over."

Unfortunately, however, Taylor was wrong; their troubles were only beginning.

ACROSS the street, a furtive figure, with beady eyes peering from upturned coat-collar, surveyed the house carefully. A curious policeman might have identified him as "Slappy" Egan, if he had bothered to look, but no one did and "Slappy" remained unmolested.

"Cripes," he muttered to himself, "dis is gonna be a cinch. De whole woiks on the bottom floor, back window can be jimmied wid a toot'pick, no alarms, no nuttin." He chuckled and walked away.

Nor was "Slappy" alone with his ideas. Peter Q. Hornswoggle, as he walked away, found strange thoughts wandering through his massive cranium—thoughts which involved a certain amount of unorthodox action.

And J. Throgmorton Bankhead was likewise active. Belonging to that virile class known as "go-getters" and being not at all scrupulous as to how he "go-got," and certainly not intending to pay a million dollars

for the secret of Ammonium, he found it necessary to call on a certain one of his acquaintances.

This acquaintance, while a very useful one, was a bit unsavory, and Bankhead found it advisable to be very careful and cautious while visiting him. However, the conversation that ensued ended in a pleasing manner for both of them.

WALTER SILLS snapped out of an uneasy sleep with startled suddenness. He listened anxiously for a while and then leaned over and nudged Taylor. He was rewarded by a few incoherent snuffles.

"Gene, Gene, wake up! Come on. get up!"

"Eh? What is it? What are you bothering—"

"Shut up! Listen, do you hear it?"

"I don't hear anything. Leave me alone will you?"

Sills put his finger on his lips, and the other quieted. There was a distinct shuffling noise down below, in the laboratory.

Taylor's eyes widened and sleep left them entirely. "Burglars!" he whispered.

The two crept out of bed, donned bath robe and slippers, and tiptoed to the door. Taylor had a revolver and took the lead in descending the stairs.

They had traversed perhaps half the flight, when there was a sudden, surprised shout from below, followed by a series of loud, threshing noises. This continued for a few moments and then there was a loud crash of glassware.

"My ammonium!" cried Sills in a stricken voice and rushed headlong down the stairs, evading Taylor's clutching arms.

The chemist burst into the laboratory, followed closely by his cursing associate, and clicked the lights on. Two struggling figures blinked owlishly in the sudden illumination, and separated.

Taylor's gun covered them. "Well, isn't this nice," he said.

One of the two lurched to his feet from

amid a tangle of broken beakers and flasks, and, nursing a cut on his wrist, bent his portly body in a still dignified bow. It was Peter Q. Hornswoggle.

"No doubt," he said, eyeing the unwavering firearm nervously, "the circumstances seem suspicious, but I can explain very easily. You see, in spite of the very rough treatment I received after having made my reasonable proposal, I still felt a great deal of kindly interest in you two.

"Therefore, being a man of the world, and knowing the iniquities of mankind, I just decided to keep an eye on your house tonight, for I saw you had neglected to take precautions against house-breakers. Judge my surprise to see this distardly creature," he pointed to the flat-nosed, plug-ugly, who still remained on the floor in a daze, "creeping in at the back window.

"Immediately, I risked life and limb in following the criminal, attempting desperately to save your great discovery. I really feel I deserve great credit for what I have done. I'm sure you will feel that I am a valuable person to deal with and reconsider your answers to my earlier proposals."

Taylor listened to all this with a cynical smile. "You can certainly lie fluently, can't you. P. Q.?"

He would have continued at greater length and with greater forcefulness had not the other burglar suddenly raised his voice in loud protest. "Cripes, boss, dis fat slob here is only tryin' to get me in bad. I'm just followin' orders, boss. A fellow hired me to come in here and rifle the safe and I'm just oinin' a bit o' honest money. Just plain safe-crackin', boss, I ain't out to hurt no one.

"Den, just as I was gettin' down to de job—warmin' up, so to say—in crawls dis little guy wid a chisel and blowtorch and makes for de safe. Well, natu' lly, I don't like no competition, so I lays for him and then—"

But Hornswoggle had drawn himself up in icy hauteur. "It remains to be seen

whether the word of a gangster is to be taken before the word of one, who, I may truthfully say, was, in his time, one of the most eminent members of the great—"

"Quiet, both of you," shouted Taylor, waving the gun threateningly. "I'm calling the police and you can annoy *them* with your stories. Say, Walt, is everything all right?"

"I think so!" Sills returned from his inspection of the laboratory. "They only knocked over empty glassware. Everything else is unharmed."

"That's good," Taylor began, and then choked in dismay.

From the hallway, a cool individual, hat drawn well over his eyes, entered. A revolver, expertly handled, changed the situation considerably.

"O. K.," he grunted at Taylor, "drop the gat!" The other's weapon slipped from reluctant fingers and hit the floor with a clank.

The new menace surveyed the four others with a sardonic glance. "Well! So there were two others trying to beat me to it. This seems to be a very popular place."

SILLS and Taylor stared stupidly, while Hornswoggle's teeth chattered energetically. The first mobster moved back uneasily, muttering as he did so, "For Pete's sake, it's Mike the Slug."

"Yeah," Mike rasped, "Mike the Slug. There's lots of guys who know me and who know I ain't afraid to pull the trigger anytime I feel like. Come on, Baldy, hand over the works. You know—the stuff about your fake gold. Come on, before I count five."

Sills moved slowly toward the old safe in the corner. Mike stepped back carelessly to give him room, and in so doing, his coat sleeve brushed against a shelf. A small vial of sodium sulphate solution tottered and fell.

With sudden inspiration, Sills yelled, "My God, watch out! It's nitroglycerine!"

The vial hit the floor with the smashing tinkle of broken glass, and involuntarily,

Mike yelled and jumped in wild dismay. And as he did so, Taylor crashed into him with a beautiful flying tackle. At the same time, Sills lunged for Taylor's fallen weapon to cover the other two. For this, however, there was no longer need. At the very beginning of the confusion, both had faded hurriedly into the night from whence they came.

Taylor and Mike the Slug rolled round and round the laboratory floor, locked in desperate struggle while Sills hopped over and about them, praying for a moment of comparative quiet that he might bring the revolver into sharp and sudden contact with the gangster's skull.

But no such moment came. Suddenly Mike lunged, caught Taylor stunningly under the chin, and jerked free. Sills yelled in consternation and pulled the trigger at the fleeing figure. The shot was wild and Mike escaped unharmed. Sills made no attempt to follow.

A sluicing stream of cold water brought Taylor back to his senses. He shook his head dazedly as he surveyed the surrounding shambles.

"Whew!" he said, "What a night!"

Sills groaned, "What are we going to do now, Gene? Our very lives are in danger. I never thought of the possibility of thieves, or I would never have told of the discovery to the newspapers."

"Oh well, the harm's done; no use weeping over it. Now listen, the first thing we have to do now is to get back to sleep. They won't bother us again tonight. Tomorrow, you'll go to the bank and put the papers outlining the details of the process in the vault (which you should have done long ago). Staples will be here at 3 p.m.; we'll close the deal, and then, at last, we'll live happily ever after."

The chemist shook his head dolefully. "Ammonium has certainly proved to be very upsetting so far. I almost wish I had never heard of it. I'd almost rather be back doing ore analysis."

AN UNEXPECTED SURPRISE!

AS Walter Sills rattled cross-town towards his bank, he found no reason to change his wish. Even the comforting and homely jiggling of his ancient and battered automobile failed to cheer him. From a life characterized by peaceful monotony, he had entered a period of bedlam, and he was not at all satisfied with the change.

"Riches, like poverty, has its own peculiar problems," he remarked sententiously to himself as he braked the car before the two-story, marble edifice that was the bank. He stepped out carefully, stretched his cramped legs, and headed for the revolving door.

He didn't get there right away, though. Two husky specimens of the human race stepped up, one at each side, and Sills felt a very hard object pressing with painful intensity against his ribs. He opened his mouth involuntarily, and was rewarded by an icy voice in his ears, "Quiet, Baldy, or you'll get what you deserve for the damn trick you pulled on me last night."

Sills shivered and subsided. He recognized Mike the Slug's voice very easily.

"Where's the details?" asked Mike, "and make it quick."

"Inside jacket pocket," croaked Sills tremulously.

Mike's companion passed his hand dexterously into the indicated pocket and flicked out three or four folded sheets of foolscap.

"Dat it, Mike?"

A hasty appraisal and a nod, "Yeh, we got it. All right. Baldy, on your way!" A sudden shove and the two gangsters jumped into their car and drove away rapidly, while the chemist sprawled on the sidewalk. Kindly hands raised him up.

"It's all right," he managed to gasp. "I just tripped, that's all. I'm not hurt." He found himself alone again, passed into the bank, and dropped into the nearest bench,

in near-collapse. There was no doubt about it; the new life was not for him.

But he should have been prepared for it. Taylor had foreseen a possibility of this sort of thing happening. He, himself, had thought a car had been trailing him. Yet, in his surprise and fright, he had almost ruined everything.

He shrugged his thin shoulders and, taking off his hat, abstracted a few folded sheets of paper from the sweatband. It was the work of five minutes to deposit them in a vault, and see the immensely strong steel door swing shut. He felt relieved.

"I wonder what they'll do," he muttered to himself on the way home, "when they try to follow the instructions on the paper they *did* get." He pursed his lips and shook his head. "If they do, there's going to be one heck of an explosion."

Sills arrived home to find three policemen pacing leisurely up and down the sidewalk in front of the house.

"Police guard," explained Taylor shortly, "so that we have no more trouble like last night."

The chemist related the events at the bank and Taylor nodded grimly. "Well, it's checkmate for them now. Staples will be here in two hours and until then, the police will take care of things. Afterwards," he shrugged, "it will be Staples' affair."

"Listen, Gene," the chemist put in suddenly, "I'm worried about the ammonium. I haven't tested its plating abilities and those are the most important things, you know. What if Staples comes, and we find that all we have is pigeon milk."

"Hmm," Taylor stroked his chin, "you're right there. But I'll tell you what we can do. Before Staples comes, let's plate something—a spoon, suppose—for our own satisfaction."

"It's really very annoying," Sills complained fretfully. "If it weren't for these troublesome hooligans, we wouldn't have to proceed in this slipshod and unscientific manner."

"Well, let's eat dinner first."

AFTER the mid-day meal, they began. The apparatus was set up in feverish haste. In a cubic vat, a foot each way, a saturated solution Ammonaline was poured. An old, battered spoon was the cathode and a mass of ammonium amalgam (separated from the rest of the solution by a perforated glass partition) was the anode. Three batteries in series provided the current.

Sills explained animatedly, "It works on the same principle as ordinary copper plating. The ammonium ion, once the electric current is run through, is attracted to the cathode, which is the spoon. Ordinarily it would break up, being unstable, but this is not the case when it is dissolved in Ammonaline. This Ammonaline is itself very slightly ionized and oxygen is given off at the anode.

"This much I know from theory. Let us see what happens in practice."

He closed the key while Taylor watched with breathless interest. For a moment, no effect was visible. Taylor looked disappointed.

Then Sills grasped his sleeve. "See!" he hissed. "Watch the anode!"

Sure enough, bubbles of gas were slowly forming upon the spongy ammonium amalgam. They shifted their attention to the spoon.

Gradually, they noticed a change. The metallic appearance became dulled, the silver color slowly losing its whiteness. A layer of distinct, if dull, yellow was being built up. For fifteen minutes, the current ran and then Sills broke the circuit with a contented sigh.

"It plates perfectly," he said.

"Good! Take it out! Let's see it!"

"What?" Sills was aghast. "Take it out! Why, that's pure ammonium. If I were to expose it to ordinary air, the water vapor would dissolve it to NH_4OH in no time. We can't do that."

He dragged a rather bulky piece of apparatus to the table. "This," he said, "is a compressed-air container. I run it through calcium chloride dryers and then bubble the perfectly dry oxygen (safely diluted with four times its own volume of nitrogen) directly into the solvent."

He introduced the nozzle into the solution just beneath the spoon and turned on a slow stream of air. It worked like magic. With almost lightning speed, the yellow coating began to glitter and gleam, to shine with almost ethereal beauty.

The two men watched it with beating heart and panting breath. Sills shut the air off, and for a while they watched the wonderful spoon and said nothing.

Then Taylor whispered hoarsely, "Take it out. Let me feel it! My God!—it's beautiful!"

With reverent awe, Sills approached the spoon, grasped it with forceps, and withdrew it from the surrounding liquid.

What followed immediately after that can never be fully described. Later on, when excited newspaper reporters pressed them unmercifully, neither Taylor nor Sills had the least recollection of the happenings of the next few minutes.

What happened was that the moment the ammonium-plated spoon was exposed to open air, the most horrible odor ever conceived assailed their nostrils!—an odor that cannot be described, a terrible broth of Hell that plunged the room into sheer, horrible nightmare.

With one strangled gasp, Sills dropped the spoon. Both were coughing and retching, tearing wildly at their throats and mouths, yelling, weeping, sneezing!

Taylor pounced upon the spoon and looked about wildly. The odor grew steadily more powerful and their wild exertions to escape it had already succeeded in wrecking the laboratory and had upset the vat of Ammonaline. There was only one thing to do, and Sills did it. The spoon went flying out the open window into the middle of

Twelfth Avenue. It hit the sidewalk right at the feet of one of the policemen, but Taylor didn't care.

"Take off your clothes. We'll have to burn them," Sills was gasping. "Then spray something over the laboratory—anything with a strong smell. Burn sulphur. Get some liquid Bromine."

BOOTH were tearing at their clothes in distraction when they realized that someone had walked in through the unlocked door. The bell had rung, but neither had heard it. It was Staples, six-foot, lion-maned Steel King.

One step into the hall ruined his dignity utterly. He collapsed in one tearing sob and Twelfth Avenue was treated to the spectacle of an elderly, richly-dressed gentleman tearing uptown as fast as his feet would carry him, shedding as much of his clothes as he dared while doing so.

The spoon continued its deadly work. The three policemen had long since retired in abject rout, and now to the numbed and tortured senses of the two innocent and suffering causes of the entire mess came a roaring and confused shouting from the street.

Men and women were pouring out of the neighboring houses, horses were bolting. Fire engines clanged down the street, only to be abandoned by their riders. Squadrons of police came—and left.

Sills and Taylor finally gave up, and clad only in trousers, ran pell-mell for the Hud-

son. They did not stop until they found themselves neck-deep in water, with blessed, pure air above them.

Taylor turned bewildered eyes to Sills. "But how could it emit that horrible odor? You said it was stable and stable solids have no odors. It takes vapor for that, doesn't it."

"Have you ever smelled musk?" groaned Sills. "It will give off an aroma for an indefinite period without losing any appreciable weight. We've come up against something like that."

The two ruminated in silence for a while, wincing whenever the wind brought a vagrant waft of Ammonium vapor to them, and then Taylor said in a low voice, "When they finally trace the trouble to the spoon, and find out who made it, I'm afraid we'll be sued—or maybe thrown in jail."

Sills' face lengthened. "I wish I'd never seen the damned stuff! Its brought nothing but trouble." His tortured spirit gave way and he sobbed loudly.

Taylor patted him on the back mournfully. "It's not as bad as all that, of course. The discovery will make you famous and you'll be able to demand your own price, working at any industrial lab in the country. Then, too, you're a cinch to win the Nobel Prize."

"That's right," Sills smiled again, "and I may find a way to counteract the odor, too. I hope so."

"I hope so, too," said Taylor feelingly. "Let's go back. I think they've managed to remove the spoon by now."

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The printing of the summer issue of

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

has been delayed. Copies are going to press now and will be shipped next month.

Science Fiction Quarterly.

FANTASY TIMES

Number Two

Conducted by James V. Taurasi

June, 1940

FANS and FAN MAGAZINES

By Lane Stannard

One day, over a year and a half ago, a small, sized, 9 paged, hectographed fan magazine arrived with my daily mail—SCIENTI-SNAPS. Jan., 1938, 10c, boldly stated the cover. Inside was found a neat little fan mag entirely written by the editor (under a number of pen names), interesting and with atmosphere that is rarely found in sf fan magazines. This was the introduction of Walter E. Marconette to the science-fiction fan field.

Shortly after, Wally published another small fan magazine entitled SCIENCE FANTASY MOVIE REVIEW, which gave complete reviews of movies of a science-fiction or fantasy nature. THE UNDERSEA KINGDOM, SON OF KONG, FLASH GORDON, KING KONG and others were some of the movies reviewed in this fan mag. This magazine and SCIENTI-SNAPS were combined a short while after to give us the present day SCIENTI-SNAPS, a 16 page, large size 8½x11 in., perfectly mimeographed, bimonthly fan magazine. Wally puts his magazine together with perfection and neatness that comes only through time and patience.

Wally, besides being a good fan editor and writer, is also one of the topnotch fan artists. He does all the art work for his magazine and also for some of the other fan mags. His art work is good enough for a professional science-fiction magazine.

I met Wally at the time of the 2nd Annual Philadelphia Conference and was greatly surprised at his height and bulk. One would think after seeing his fan mag that he was a slim, delicate fellow, but lo and behold, there stood a six-footer of extra-busky build. His personality, though, fits his magazine and a regular "ideal" active fan, I title him.

Next issue: SAM MOSKOWITZ.

SCIENTIFARIO

By Millie Taurasi

One of Arch Ober's plays recently broadcasted, entitled, MONEY, MONEY, MONEY, concerned a man who was haunted by the soul of a man he killed for money. Edmond MacDonald, who played the main role, will soon be seen in the Karloff-Lugosi film, BLACK FRIDAY.

Arch Ober's plays and the best fantasies ever presented on the radio. Most of them go into the pure fantasy, while some are strictly of a science fictional nature, that goes right into the heart of a science-fiction fan. Some are also of a horror nature, so that one loses quite some sleep after hearing them.

FANTASY'S HALL OF FAME

No. 2—Otto Binder

Otto Binder is today's greatest science-fiction writer. He is recognized in every quarter as such. You read his yarns under the pen-name of EANDO BINDER, which is a hangover from the early days when he over to write in collaboration with his brother Earl. But for the past few years, it's been Otto and only Otto

that's been writing those swell yarns.

Otto has a few sidelines to his "straight" story writing; he writes stories for a number of cartoon strips, which his brother, Jack Binder, the science-fiction illustrator, draws. Some of this work may be found in BLUE RIBBON COMICS and TOP NOTCH COMICS.

One of the things that we really enjoy, is reading Otto's explanation to some artist's cover. You'll remember that he explained the June, Aug., and Oct., 1939 covers of SCIENCE FICTION. Editor Charlie Hornig asked artist Paul, in each case, to use his own imagination and draw a regular super-science-fiction scene. Paul did, and after they were finished, Charlie would show them to Otto and tell him to write a plausible explanation for them. Otto then wrote those interesting articles about the covers, and a darn good job he did, too.

Otto himself is a tall fellow—slightly shy, and clean cut. He is a very valuable member of the Queens SFL and can always be depended upon to give a very interesting talk on his or his brother's (Jack) work. The Queens SFL girls consider him very "cute." We can usually tell how hard he's been working by watching his weight. When he's slightly plump, mind you, I said slightly, well he's been taking it pretty easy, but when he's slim and streamlined, he's been working like the devil turning out ace stories. And he's been mighty slim for a long time now.

SCIENTIFILMS

By Mario Racie, Jr.

THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI. Fantasy film made in 1919, by Deca-Bioscop. Stars Conrad Veidt. The story begins in an insane asylum, with a patient telling the story. He tells of an old medieval type village where the chief drawing card is supposed to be a very old man kept under a form of suspended animation. The master of this hypnotized man (for it's only hypnotism in reality) sends his subject out at night to do murder. The sets of this film are very fantastic, on the cubistic style, and the whole thing is fantastic and weird.

METROPOLIS. UFA film made in 1926, directed by Fritz Lang. The story takes place in the future, in the super-electrical Metropolis, and the cities underground. There are clashes between the workers underground, with their bosses in the super-city above. This is the film that was shown at the First World STF Convention.

JUST IMAGINE. A Fox Film made in 1930. Musical Fantasy. Story opens in 1880, switching to a scene in 1930, showing the changes made in 50 years, then what changes might take place in another 50 years. And we see the New York of 1980. During the picture, we are taken to Mars on a rocket ship, and find that the Martians all have twins. One Martian is good, while his twin is evil.

DOCTOR X. Produced by Warner Bros. about 1932, with Lionel Atwill, Fay Wray. In Technicolor. The story is about a crooked scientist who

makes synthetic flesh, so that he can replace his missing hand.

THE MAN THEY COULDN'T HANG. Made by Columbia in 1939, with Boris Karloff, playing a scientist who invents a mechanical heart to revive dead persons. Accused of murder, he is hanged and brought back to life with his own invention. Later he plans revenge, then dies with his secret.

By the time you read this, there will have been released THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS, starring Vincent Price and Sir Cedric (Mr. Brink) Hardwicke—also the 20th Century-Fox version of Maeterlinck's fantasy "The Bluebird" in technicolor, starring Shirley Temple.

From Paramount comes another technicolor sf film, Dr. CYCLOPS, where human beings are diminished in size to one-fifth their original size.

FAN MAG REVIEW

By J. Harry Vincent

New Fan Magazines

THE SCIENTIAL, published by Thomas Hoguet of 3671 Broadway, New York, N. Y. The first issue of this fine fan magazine, dated Jan., 1940, contains 20 pages, 8½" x 11" and good fan material by Malcolm Jameson, Harry Warner, Jr., Mort Weisinger, W. Lawrence Hamling, and others. It has a well drawn cover by Studley, a newcomer to sf. The mimeographing is a little bad this issue, but I expect that it will improve with future issues. The price is 10c an issue.

CHANGE OF PACE, published by Francis V. Faro of 125 W. 6th Street, Boston, Mass., is another new fan magazine that shows promise. 20 large-size pages of material by Sam Moskowitz, Warner, Bob Tucker, Hoy Ping Fong and Ken.

STARDUST, published by Hamling of 2609 Argyle St., Chicago, Ill. The only printed fan magazine in the United States with good yarns by Robert Moore Williams, L. Sprague de Camp, Willy Ley, Ralph Milne Farley, Jack Williamson, and others. A fine print job and well worth 20c a copy.

CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP. FANTASY-NEWS, science-fiction's only weekly newspaper, has changed hands. James V. Taurasi, who originated it on June 24, 1938, has turned it over to William S. Sykora of 31-51 41st Street, Long Island City, N. Y., who will continue to publish it weekly. This newspaper has set a record of having more issues published than any other fan magazine.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Send in your questions concerning science-fiction fans, fan-organizations, and magazines, and we will answer as many as possible in each issue. Submit all questions to James V. Taurasi, 137-07 32nd Ave., Flushing, N. Y.)

Q. What is the oldest fan magazine still being published?—H. L.

A. THE SCIENCE FICTION COLLECTOR, the first issue published by Morris Doolittle and dated May 1, 1936. It is still being published, now by John V. Baltadonis.

The POISON REALM

by JOHN COLERIDGE

Terrance and Lona were just ordinary reporters—but theirs is a strange fate! Thrown into a far-flung world of another dimension, they face death in an alien jungle inhabited by horrible monsters—and the poisonous gases of the weird atmosphere crawl into their tortured lungs!

“I WOULDN’T attempt to explain the nature of my experiments to anybody but a scientist—and a darned good one at that!”

Terrance Hale stood his ground desperately. “But just tell me one thing, Dr. Vance. What is that tower affair on the

roof for? Has it got anything to do with your theory of the Fifth Dimensional Continuum? What do you expect to do with it?”

The scientist put his stained hands together in a pious gesture, but his expression was sarcastic.

“From the mouth of babes,” he quoted



Some spawn of this hyper-alien environment!

"Young man," he continued, "when Einstein's Theory first came out, only twelve men in the world were able to understand it. There are only two people who understand my new theory. I'm one. I haven't found the other one yet. Now get out."

"But Dr. Vance—that tower!" pleaded Hale. He tried wheedling. "I've driven a hundred miles up here just to get some report for my sheet. You wouldn't want me to lose my job, would you?"

The elderly scientist glared. Then, in an earnest voice he said, "Let me give you a tip, son. Drive back that hundred miles and stay there. I'm going to try an experiment in an hour that may end—disasterously. If worst comes to worst, and you're in the vicinity, you won't have any job to go back to, to lose. Understand?"

"But tell me—"

Vance literally exploded. His white mane flew up as he jerked his head violently and threw up his arms. "Will you go!" he shrieked. "Or shall I have my assistant throw you out? Hans—Hans—"

The assistant, Hans, came running up from the other side of the laboratory. He was even smaller and scrawnier than the scientist.

Hale grinned at the thought of being "thrown out," but shrugged and left, realizing he had overstayed his welcome by far. The irascible scientist, at the eve of some dangerous experiment, was not a man to interview. Perhaps after the trial, he would feel like crowing about it, if it worked. Terrance Hale decided to stay around for that possibility. His boss had sent him up for Sunday supplement material and Hale would hardly dare go back without something.

He drove his wheezy old car away and tooled it down the rutty road that led toward the county highway. Why had the scientist picked such a God-forsaken spot? He had had all his apparatus and supplies trucked up here at tremendous cost. It seemed like a crack-pot stunt.

But Dr. Vance was no crack-pot. He was the man of the hour in science, a trail-blazer into the unknown. A second—and perhaps superior—Einstein. Two years before, after announcing his amazing Fifth Dimensional Continuum Theory, he had moved his laboratory up here into practically deserted regions. But why? That was the question everyone asked, but no one had found the answer to. The scientist had become mighty close-mouthed about it. Was his brilliant genius about to scintillate with something still more astounding than his first theory?

Hale reflected that it might be so. When out of sight of the laboratory, behind a growth of stunted trees, he parked his car at the side of the road and got out. He lit a cigarette and sat on the running board in the morning sun. At least he would get a tan.

A FEW minutes later he jerked up his head and listened. Another car was coming up the road. It appeared around the bend, jouncing uncomfortably for its driver, and came to a stop near Hale. The young woman that stepped out was slim and graceful, her hair a golden blaze in the sunlight. Hale liked her instantly, in the quick way he had of forming his opinion of people. For one thing, she had blue eyes, and he had always had a weakness for blue eyes.

"Is this the right way to Dr. Simon Vance's place?" she asked, standing on the running board and looking around doubtfully.

"It is, Miss," nodded Hale. "Right around these trees. Do you have an appointment to see him?" He was already thinking of striking a bargain with her, if such was the case.

The girl shook her head. "No. I'm on the staff of Science Forum Magazine, sent up here to get some material from Dr. Vance for an article."

"Oh," said Hale. "Don't think you'll get it, sister," he added laconically.

The girl stared frigidly at him. "Why not? Who are you, anyway, and why do you say that?"

"Terrance Hale, m'am, of the Journal. Call me Terry." He then related his experiences in trying to interview the scientist.

The girl snapped her fingers when he was done. "I'll get an interview."

"Or your name isn't—?" prodded Hale, as the beginning of an acquaintance he had already made up his mind to promote.

She hesitated, looking him over. "None of your business," she said airily. "It might be Lona Darson," she added, climbing back into her car.

"Pleeztameecha," said Hale. "But if you get anything out of him, you're a better man than I am."

"Not man—woman." The girl smiled. "Did you ever hear of feminine wiles, Mr. Terrance Hale?" She drove on.

"Lona Darson," Hale murmured to himself. "Lona Darson—dum-de-dum—fits in with a song—" For the next five minutes he hummed the song, till the roar of the returning car interrupted him. It zoomed up recklessly and stopped just beyond his car with squealing brakes.

The girl stepped out with an expression of annoyance, slamming the door. "Not a thing," she snapped. "He refused to talk and just hurried me out. All this long trip and waste of time for nothing! I could scratch his face!"

"I knew you — er — feminine wiles wouldn't work," commented Hale. "Not with him. Geniuses aren't human. He's at the verge of some almighty experiment, and won't talk till the strain of it is over. Why not join me in a wait and then we can both tackle him afterward?"

The girl's face suddenly changed. "Maybe we'd better go! Dr. Vance said it might be a dangerous experiment. He wouldn't say in what way, but he said the further away I went the better. Somehow"—her

face became a little frightened—"I know he meant every word!"

"Say, he really did scare you!" laughed Hale. "But he just wanted to make sure we'd stay away—"

"No, it is going to be a dangerous experiment!" breathed Lona Darson. "I—I just know!"

"Now what's that—feminine intuition?" Hale became serious. "Well, I'm going to stay and find out. It has something to do with his Fifth Dimension theory, and that's news, which is my business." He set his jaw firmly.

"I'm with you," said the girl, after a slight hesitation. "Where to?" she asked as Hale led the way between the trees over a matting of dead leaves and wild grasses.

"We'll get as close to the lab as possible, without being seen. Maybe we can find out what's going on."

THEY came to the edge of the tree patch and peered over a fringe of bushes. The old hunting lodge that was now a laboratory was no more than a hundred feet ahead, across the clearing. It looked like a miniature castle. But unlike a castle, it housed the most modern scientific apparatus available and one of the greatest minds the world had ever known. What mysterious research was being conducted in its enigmatic interior?

"See that tower?" pointed Hale. "I'm dead certain it's the king-pin of Dr. Vance's experiment."

Perhaps thirty feet high, a skeleton tower of steel reared over the flat roof. At its top was a small platform on which had been constructed something, protected from the elements by a large tarpaulin. A heavy rubber-coated cable hung down to the roof.

"Look!" whispered Lona.

A trap door in the roof at the base of the tower had clattered open. The scientist's assistant, Hans, bobbed up out of it. Agile as a monkey, he clambered up the steel

ladder at the side of the tower and reached the platform. He pulled off the tarpaulin and set it to one side.

The affair revealed made no recognizable pattern to the two watchers—coils, tubes, gleaming mirrors and an intricate system of wiring that snaked about seemingly in haphazard fashion. It was no more informative than the inside of a ten-tube radio. Hans bent over it and his hands reached to various parts, apparently making adjustments.

"What do you know about the Fifth Dimensional Continuum theory?" Hale asked the girl abruptly.

Lona screwed up her face thoughtfully. "Only that it's a theory of co-existing worlds in a universe of five dimensions, whatever that means. Dr. Vance has taken de Sitter's world-lines and Einstein's space-time continuum and gone them one better by saying that the *fifth* dimension is a sort of *mental* plane. All objects must have length, breadth, thickness, time-value, and mental-value—that is, a sort of psychic-dimension, without which the object becomes non-existent. I've looked over some of the mathematics, as much as I could safely digest, and it really looks sound—don't you think?"

The reporter looked at the girl in surprise. "Yes—oh, yes," he agreed, wondering if that was a look of faint amusement in her eyes. He did not continue the subject. He had a hearty suspicion that she knew plenty about the theory and could go off the deep end and leave him stranded.

He glanced at his watch. "About a half hour to wait yet, before he starts anything. We can take it easy till then." He spied a patch of grass and stretched himself out on it lazily.

Lona stood hesitantly, glancing at the laboratory. "Aren't we rather close? Suppose there were an—an explosion? Skip it," she added hastily at his look of scorn. She sat down with her back against a tree. By mutual consent, their conversation turned to other things and both of them relaxed

from a feeling of tension over what might be going on at the laboratory.

Insects buzzed around them and birds twittered in the trees. A soft breeze kept the sun-heated air from becoming uncomfortable. It was pastoral and quiet, and Hale began to feel at peace with all the world. It was pleasant to just lie there and talk aimless things with a girl like Lona, and to watch the changing expressions in her blue eyes—

SUDDENLY this peaceful universe was shattered. Like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky, the bull-throated roar of a Diesel generator throbbed from the direction of the laboratory. Behind this sounded a shrill high whine from the top of the tower. The cryptic apparatus there suddenly burst out in a rainbow flood of radiance that bathed all the surrounding area in a ghastly phosphorescent glow, stronger than sunlight.

All this had happened in seconds. Hale had struggled on his elbow, paralyzed by the sudden pandemonium of light and sound. Lona had turned pale, in a frozen attitude of panic.

When Hale did try to get to his feet, he was thrown flat by a sudden pitching of the ground. Lona gave a sharp scream.

Then the universe seemed to go utterly to pieces. The ground dipped and swayed sickeningly. Trees danced at insane angles and the sun overhead darted in a crazy circle. It was as though earth had been uprooted from its orbit and flung pell-mell through space.

Hale's sensations were varied and all-frightening. First he had the feeling that he was hanging upside down, on a surface that was no longer the ground, and that he would fall—into the sky. Then he was being turned inside-out, like a glove. His final sensation was that he was traveling at blinding speed, far, far faster than light! And all the while something hammered his brain relentlessly, till it ached frightfully.

In a blurred, distorted vision of a whirling world falling apart, Hale dimly made out the body of Lona Darson, arms and legs twisted in impossible ways. He saw the agony on her face. Desperately he tried to crawl to her, to help and protect her in some way. His clawing fingers failed to move his body over the pulsating, careening ground. Panting, sweating, he cursed aloud. He could not hear his own voice in a hellish bedlam of cracklings and thunders as though the earth were splitting in two.

This holocaust went on for an eternity—or was it just seconds?

But suddenly it was all over. The ground became still and firm again. The noises vanished into an aching stillness. Hale looked around in bewilderment. All was normal again, as it had been before. The trees that had seemed to bend and break were upright. Nowhere was the ground disturbed. Nothing had changed. His own body, that he imagined might be little more than a dying pulp, was whole and sound and unscratched.

He had seen the world around him blasted and torn, and yet here it was—in one piece! Hale scratched his head. Had it been just a vivid nightmare?

Then, with a cry, he sprang to the side of Lona, seeing now that she was unconscious. He chafed her wrists. In a moment, her eyes opened. Bewilderment flooded them as she looked around incredulously. She sat up, looking at her arms as though wondering why they weren't broken in several places.

"W-what happened?" she gasped. "I thought I saw"—horror shone from her eyes—"the world collapsing. But now it's all—like before!"

"Not even a bump on us," nodded Hale. "It's the craziest experience I ever had. I could swear I saw you twisted in a way you couldn't be twisted unless you were a rag-doll or had rubber bones. Yet here you are—"

They stared at each other, completely baffled.

Lona's eyes suddenly narrowed. "Perhaps," she said slowly, "it was all in our minds—purely a *mental* experience. We just *thought* we saw all those terrible things happen."

"Dr. Vance's experiment must be the answer," returned Hale. "Come on, let's take a look at that tower—"

They felt peculiarly light as they rose to their feet and stepped to the edge of the bushes. They looked out and gasped.

The laboratory was not there!

IN ANOTHER DIMENSION!

IN ITS place, taking up about the same area, was simply a stretch of dark, purplish ground, overgrown with tall, lacy plants like ferns. All else was the same in the clearing—even the pump was there—but the building, its tower, all its contents, and its two occupants, were gone.

"For Pete's sake!" said Hale in a strangled voice. "For Pete's sake!"

Lona trembled against him like a frightened rabbit. "Gone!" she gasped, "as though something had wrenched his whole laboratory right off the earth!"

Hale closed his eyes and told himself not to be a damned fool and believe the laboratory wasn't there. Then he opened them hopefully.

"It *is* gone!" he said. "But where and how? You can't just take a big thing like that and whisk it away."

"Do you suppose," whispered Lona, "that Dr. Vance somehow transported himself to—the *Fifth Dimensional Continuum*?"

Hale started, for the thought had just then occurred to him. "If that's his way of proving there's a Fifth Dimension — by going off to it—he's welcome to it." He coughed a little and pulled the girl back suddenly. "Say, there's some kind of strong gas coming from there—maybe it's poison. We'd better leave."

Throats tickling, they retreated toward their cars. Lona sniffed at the gases and her face became puzzled. She stared around thoughtfully.

"Man, what a story this is going to be!" Hale was saying, "Scientist and laboratory vanish in thin air! This is better than I bargained for. Wait'll I get my hands on a typewriter—"

"HANS! Hans, do you see it? — the world of the Fifth Dimensional Continuum around us!"

Dr. Simon Vance, in his laboratory, was more excited than his assistant had ever seen him. But the assistant was excited too. His eyes glued to a window, he was looking out at the other worldly terrain outside that had replaced the normal surroundings into which the building had originally been set.

"It's weird!" said the usually phlegmatic Hans, eyes popping.

He saw a smooth, level stretch of dark, purplish terrain, thickly grown with unnameable vegetation. It was like a jungle of the Carboniferous period — primeval, menacing, inimical.

And yet it was something utterly alien—something earth had never seen before, in all its millions of years of life and evolution. The fern-growths were not fern-growths. What seemed to be giant fungi were not fungi. They were spawned from seed and spore unknown to terrestrial conditions.

Hans shuddered, with a chill sense of the completely unearthlike.

The red haze was not just a dank spume from air overlaid with gases, refracting the sunlight. It was a noisome chemical gas that earth's atmosphere had never known. It was a product of some incredible metabolism that the alien flora lived by. They exuded this poisonous gas instead of oxygen. The ground was not common dirt, or sand, or rock. It had the dull luster of wax, and glowed faintly with its own light,

especially where the shadows lay under thick branches.

It was almost unbelievable, impossible! It was a segment of the dark and terrible Unknown, hitherto beyond man's ken. It was something out of the limbo of the normal universe, more alien than the strangest planet of the remotest star could be! It was part of the vast Outworld—the universe of other dimensions.

Gasping, Hans turned away momentarily from the scene, almost on the verge of screeching to make the nightmarish spectacle go away. But the hooks of morbid fascination, stronger than fear, pulled his eyes back again.

Something was moving in that miasmatic jungle—some creature, some horrible spawn of this hyper-alien environment. The willowy bole of a tall fern bent aside as a bulky form slithered past. It was a beast of shocking proportions and protuberances that made no ordinary shape. It had claws and thick legs like a bear. It had the ponderous neck and mane of a lion. It had the jaws of a crocodile. It reared up like a Tyrannosaurus. It had the long, mean horns of a water buffalo. It had three great, gleaming eyes and snorted fiery breath from its flaring nostrils.

It had no earthly counterpart. It was a nameless monster, ferocious, stealthy, ravenous, cunning in its every movement.

Hans turned away, sick to the bottom of his being. Such things were not for earthly eyes to see and understand.

AS Terrance Hale and Lona Darson, hand in hand, moved through the trees toward their parked cars, the girl wrinkled her nose distastefully. Suddenly she paled and tugged forward.

"We'd better hurry," she exclaimed. "Bromine gas! I remember that odor too well from my course in chem, in college. And—and"—she took another suspicious sniff—"and cyanogen too! Good Lord, Terry—"

"Are they bad stuff?" he asked. Fleetingly, he reflected it was nice to hear her call him Terry for the first time, as though they were old friends.

"Bad!" cried the girl. "Bromine is as bad as chlorine, which they used in the war. Cyanogen is the quickest-acting poison-gas known. They're both fatal in certain concentrations!"

At the word "fatal," Hale automatically broke into a run.

"I can't imagine where those gases came from," panted Lona. "The laboratory disappearing—two deadly gases in the air—it doesn't add up to anything reasonable, Terry!"

"We're not doing any adding right now," shot back Hale, grimly. "We're just hopping into our cars and—hello, what—"

They stopped dead, thunderstruck. They had come in view of their cars. Hale's machine was intact, but Lona's was only half there. The front half, pointing away from the laboratory-site, had vanished. It looked as though something had sheered through as cleanly as a razor cutting cheese.

And when they looked beyond, horror filled their eyes. It was not the scene that should be there. The trees and bushes were gone! In their place were towering fronds of strange vegetation such as they had seen back where the laboratory should have stood. The road they had driven up ended abruptly, cut off by the waxy-like terrain in which the bizarre vegetation took root.

"W-where's the rest of your car?" asked Hale rather dumbly. "For Pete's sake, what's happened? What is all this, anyway? Lona, have we gone bugs?"

They were almost convinced of it, staring at the nightmarish panorama before them.

"THE world of the Fifth Dimensional Continuum!" Dr. Vance murmured again. "This is the proof of my theory that universes exist side by side in a five-dimensional continuum—like the leaves of a book,

or like the peelings of an onion. We have bridged the fifth dimension, by means of our amplified telekinetic force, and reached a new cosmos!"

"It it a terrible one!" said Hans in a half-moan. "I don't like the looks of it at all, Dr. Vance. It's frightful and menacing!"

The scientist came down to earth. "Oh nuts, man!" he scoffed. "Don't be a timid mouse. There's nothing to worry about."

Hans sniffed suddenly, twisting his head. "Gas!" he cried. "We'll be poisoned!" He glared at the scientist accusingly. "Do you realize what you've done? We're marooned here, trapped! We'll be poisoned, or attacked by those awful beasts out there . . ."

He glanced around wildly, as though seeking some way of escape.

Dr. Vance sniffed at the contaminated air and then strode toward a supply closet, with an almost casual expression. He pulled out two gas-helmets and handed one to his assistant.

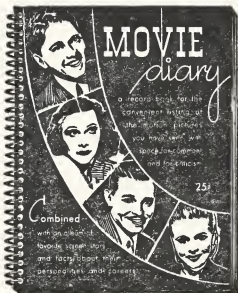
"Had you forgotten I was prepared, Hans?" he said easily. "As for those beasts . . . just watch what will happen to them."

THE front half of the car was nonexistent. The split bole of a huge tree without bark rested against the sheered portion. It looked like the cross-section of two different worlds shoved together. All along the line, grassy ground joined abruptly to purplish, waxy matter.

Terrance Hale and Lona Darson felt a crawling uneasiness, as they stood there, staring.

Suddenly the girl gave out a hysterical screech. "There's something terribly . . . *wrong!*" she cried. "Look at the sun, Terry. Why is it so big and blue? What does it all mean?"

Hale glanced up at the sun through his fingers and eyelashes. It was certainly a queer-looking sun, twice as large as it should be, at least, and vividly blue in color. The radiance it shed was of a ghastly



SENSATIONAL NOVELTY *hailed* by movie fans everywhere!

A 100-page spiral-bound record-book planned especially for movie fans. Each left-hand page contains a beautifully lithographed portrait of a star, a brief biography, date and place of birth, height, weight, color of hair and eyes, marital status, and an inside slant on their backgrounds, early struggles and personal traits. Each right hand page is a ruled form for keeping a permanent record of the movies you have seen: (1) title of picture, (2) date and where you saw it, (3) the stars, (4) the supporting cast and (5) general comments of things you will want to remember, intimate thoughts, with whom you saw the picture and your own judgment of the film. A personal record and reference book, new, unique, desirable!

ONLY
25¢

M. L. Sales Co.
160 West Broadway
New York City, Dept. 7

Gentlemen:

Please mail me a copy of MOVIE DIARY.
25c (coin) is enclosed.

Name

Address

.....

tone, bathing their surroundings in ab normal shades that made blues and green stand out much more sharply than red and yellows.

Hale suddenly realized the temperature was higher too, and that he had been uncomfortable in the past few minutes since the laboratory had vanished. He sworn then, softly and steadily, to give his reeling mind a chance to rationalize. Suddenly he dashed away and climbed the nearest tree back of them. From its top he looked in all directions.

When he came down and faced Lona his eyes were bleak. "This crazy forest completely surrounds us!" he announced "We're in a ring of it about three hundred yards wide!"

He looked carefully at the girl, wondering how she would take it. Her face looked shocked. Trickling sweat had furrowed through powder and rouge. She looked half wilted.

Sensing his reaction, the eternal femininity came to the fore and Lona took a compact out of her purse. She gave a little shriek as she saw her face in the mirror. Then with busy fingers, she repaired the damage. A few moments later, she snapped her compact shut. Her manner had changed from near-hysteria to firm courage.

"What magic was that?" asked Hal admiringly. "I thought for a moment you were going to be a weak-sister on me."

"You men swear when you get your mental breath knocked out. We women powder our noses. Mental uplift. Same difference." Lona was almost calm now.

But she had to fight to keep her voice from trembling as she said, "Terry, I don't think this is our world any more! This is the world of the Fifth Dimensional Continuum!"

"Yeah, I guess so," agreed Hale soberly. "When Dr. Vance yanked himself into the F. D. somehow, some of the F. D. came here in exchange. But why it had to drap

itself around us like a coiled snake . . .
He trailed off into muttered curses.

"No, Terry! It's the other way around!" said Lona bleakly. "Dr. Vance sent us off into the Fifth Dimension! Remember that queer experience we had of being turned inside out and upside down and rushing somewhere? That was our trip into the Fifth Dimension . . . through a sort of mental plane. But he didn't know, of course, that we were transported. He simply sent a circle of land surrounding his laboratory to the Fifth Dimension, and we were on it, against his warnings."

The girl spoke rapidly, as though putting the final pieces of a jig-saw puzzle together. Hale stood open-mouthed.

"**H**IS laboratory still stands on earth, where it has always been. Surrounding it is a circle of alien land exactly the same shape and size . . . like a doughnut . . . of this earth-piece we're on. He found the way to exchange them, through the Fifth Dimensional psychic-plane. It probably involved no actual physical transference, but just a mental or probably telekinetic process. And don't you see, Terry, it's his way of exploring the Fifth Dimensional universe!"

Hale nodded a little dazedly.

"I get it," he said. "Clever guy. He brings a sample of the alien world that he wants to see right to his doorstep. He makes the mountain come to him. Clever guy!"

The line of his jaw tightened as he looked around. "And here we are," he growled, "marooned in the Fifth Dimension! How . . . how far from earth do you suppose we are?"

The girl sucked in her breath. Her eyes grew misty as though she were thinking of the biggest number there was.

"Terry, there's no way of judging that . . . not in terms we understand. It's not just miles, or light-years, or distance at

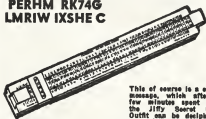
(Continued on page 92)

Make Your Own SECRET CODES in a **FLASH**

It's as simple as sliding one piece of wood against another—and that's exactly what you do with this highly ingenious code-making slide-rule. It's so simple that a child can master it in a short time, yet so baffling as to challenge the experts. It's educational, develops your unused brain cells, and it does all this in such a pleasant and natural way that you are unaware of it.

The Lawrence Secret Code Outfit provides endless hours of useful, constructive entertainment. The usual games, such as Treasure Hunts, Scavenger Hunts, G-men, Spies, etc., can be considerably "pepped-up" by the use of this coding and decoding outfit. Just imagine getting the following note:

**PERHM RK74G
LMRIW IXSHE C**



This of course is a coded message, which after a few minutes spent with the Jiffy Secret Code Outfit can be deciphered to read:

LANDING 30 CHINESE TODAY

In August 1914 from a German wireless station came the innocent-sounding message, "A SON IS BORN." WAR! came the electrifying cry from thousands of amateur and professional cryptographers who hastily decoded the terse message. Today history is repeating itself. Be among the thousands of amateur cryptographers who, glued to their short-wave receivers, are daily thrilled by the secret radio messages of war movements, etc., flashing through the ether.

Start the fun going. Order your outfit NOW, or better still, get two of them, one for your friend. Then, with the aid of a code-practice set you can both send and receive secretly coded messages and help each other to decode them. You will be surprised how efficient you can become after practicing only a short time.

MAKES OVER 50,000,000 DIFFERENT SECRET CODES!

A 20 page booklet tells you in simple, easily understandable language how to master this art. This book was written by W. St. John Maloney, noted writer of detective stories and cryptograph specialist. You can create your own secret codes 10 minutes after you've read the book. It is replete with examples and actual coded messages.

Lawrence Code "Slide Rule" and
20 page instruction book..... **60c**
2 sets for..... **\$1.00**
Parcel Post Prepaid in U.S.A.

M. L. SALES CO.

Dept. 7 160 W. Broadway, N. Y. C.

WHO IS THE SHIELD??

See

PEP COMICS

10c on All Newsstands

8 Beautiful PRINTS 25¢

Your rolls developed same day received, mailed back in 24 hours. No extra charge for developing. Only 25¢ for 8 artistic prints on DECKLE-EDGED, non-fade, quality paper. Special processes bring out all the beautiful highlights, contrasts and brilliant tones in your snapshots. Each print a work of art.

FREE

2 5x7 ENLARGEMENTS

With every roll, 2 professional quality enlargements, suitable for framing — on high-grade, double-weight paper. Send rolls with check, money-order or coins to: **FAST-X-FOТО, Dept. 12, Box 477, JERSEY CITY, N. J.**

PICK THE JOB YOU WANT



TRAIN TO QUALIFY FOR RADIO-TELEVISION

Have you a job or do you seek one? In either case, National Schools can definitely help you. Without giving up present employment you can get practical preliminary training; then receive intensive shop instruction at school at no extra cost. Every branch taught—Radio, Television, Broadcasting, Sound, etc. Oldest trade school in West.

Get the facts. No mis-statements. Learn about this flexible plan to fit your needs.

NATIONAL SCHOOLS

**FREE
LITERATURE
POSTPAID**

MAIL COUPON FOR DETAILS

NATIONAL SCHOOLS, Dept. DAR-6
4000 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, Calif.
Request for Free Literature on Radio and Television.

NAME _____ AGE _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____

(Continued from page 91)

all. I know. I've looked at those equations. They use terms of dimension that would count our entire galaxy as an unmeasurable fraction of the smallest unit!"

Hale's eyes became a little hard. "You mean you really don't know just how far we are from . . . home? And there's no way of saying?" He snorted a bit sarcastically.

"Please don't ask me to explain, Terry," said Lona. "We're unthinkably far from earth, in another dimension—one humans don't ordinarily travel at all. No matter in which direction I pointed, I wouldn't be pointing toward earth, either. We're lost, Terry . . . horribly lost . . ."

Lona Darson was suddenly sobbing on his shoulder.

"There, there!" said Hale, automatically patting her head. "I was lost in the woods once and thought I'd never get out, but I did." There was a brittle cheerfulness in his tones.

He looked around with eyes red-rimmed from the touch of bromine. To himself he added, "But I never saw a woods like this before!"

"No, neither did I," thought Lona to herself. Then she choked on a sob.

They looked at each other startled. "Why, I heard what you said, though I didn't hear your voice!" gasped the girl.

"And I heard you . . . in my mind!" said Hale.

"Telepathy!" cried Lona. "But it's not so strange. This is the psychic dimension, the one in which thought radiates freely. I remember that from the equations."

"Well, so what?" growled Hale. "We're still stuck here."

The twining wisps and streamers of red fog of deadly poison from the alien jungle crept inward toward them, like a stealthy enemy. And in the depths of the alien jungle, savage beasts roamed, whose one blow would spell death to the two humans.

DR. VANCE and his assistant Hans looked like grotesque gnomes as they peered out through the goggles of their gas-masks at the unworldly scene about their laboratory.

There was a change going on out there. The reddish murk that overhung the ultrajungle was thinning. Eddying currents arose that spiraled the red fog into the blue sky of earth, dispersing it in that vast vault. As the mists lightened, the alien vegetation became starkly revealed in the bright sunshine. It wasn't green vegetation. It was pulpy white, as revolting in texture as dead flesh.

Dr. Vance ripped off his mask finally.

"See, I told you, Hans!" he chortled. "The red mist had to diffuse into the air. That danger is past. We can even go out there now . . ."

"No . . . no!" interposed Hans, shaking his head violently. "Those beasts . . ."

Dr. Vance pointed. "There's one of the creatures. Watch him!"

The hulking shape of a nameless monster lumbered among the giant flora. He seemed to be running in a blind panic. His pace slowed as the red mist thinned steadily. Finally he stopped altogether and sank to his haunches. His lungs heaved in a labored way, like a fish out of water. He rolled over on his side, kicking feebly. He was obviously marked for death.

"You see, they can't live in oxygen, or in earth's atmosphere," resumed Dr. Vance. "Their metabolism requires bromine and cyanogen, which is their normal atmosphere. Oxygen kills them as surely as the other gases would kill us. In an hour or so no living thing in that area will exist. Of course, no living thing of earth could survive on that other world with its atmosphere hell-brew of lethal gases. If any birds or field-mice or insects were transported to the Fifth Dimensional Conti . . ."

(Continued on page 94)

HELP YOURSELF TO SUCCESS! NOW YOU CAN BE BOSS OF "A SMALL BUSINESS OF YOUR OWN"

Do you need more money? Would you like to be your own boss—at work that you enjoy doing? Roger Babson, one of the greatest business experts in America, says: "Your real goal should be to get a small business of your own." Now YOU, too, can take this sound advice! The book pictured below shows you the practical money-making plans now being used by thousands of men and women. America is still the land of opportunity! The 1968 successful plan is "A SMALL BUSINESS OF YOUR OWN" PROVE that the average man or woman can make plenty of extra money with these money-making ideas!

1000 MONEY-MAKING PLANS

Without Capital Investment

Many of the money-making plans in this book require an investment of money—just your willingness to use these ideas for your own benefit. You will find in these pages plans exactly suited to YOU. No special experience or education is necessary.



START WORK TODAY!

These plans have been used successfully by all types of people—educated and uneducated, old and young, men and women, strong and weak. It is truly amazing what YOU can do—when you know how!

Why be idle a day longer than you have to? These plans are practical ones that can be started at once!

SEND NO MONEY!

Have a copy of "A SMALL BUSINESS OF YOUR OWN" in your home for 5 days' approval—if you do not find it a BIG MONEY-MAKING PLAN FOR YOU, return the book and you owe nothing. Send us money now. Just mail the coupon today!



GET TO WORK AT ONCE!

M. L. SALES CO., Dept. 7
160 W. B'WAY, NEW YORK, N. Y.

Send me for approval a copy of

"A SMALL BUSINESS OF YOUR OWN"

(1000 Spare-Time Money-Making Ideas)

I will pay the postman \$1 (plus postage) with the understanding that if I am not completely satisfied I may return the book to you in 5 days and you will refund my payment.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....

☐ If you wish to have book sent postage paid enclose \$1, plus 10c for postage charges, and check this box.

GET YOUR BODY OUT OF THE DUMPS

Stimulate Digestion
Build Up Vitality

Feel down in the dumps? Lack your old PEP? Have frequent slight digestive upsets? Then—if there is nothing organically wrong with you—**SLUGGISH DIGESTION** may have you down. It can give you heartburn, gas, a dizzy head.

Don't resort to harsh laxatives or drugs for sluggish digestion. **START** those slow **DIGESTIVE JUICES FLOWING FAST-ER.** Set the millions of tiny cells of Fleischmann's live Yeast to work on those digestive-juice glands. This yeast is a **STIMULATOR.** It starts digestive juices flowing faster. In test cases digestion was greatly increased. Eat Fleischmann's Yeast regularly. Two cakes a day—one first thing in the morning, one a half hour before supper. See if you don't begin to **FEEL LIKE A MILLION.** Write today for "You Can't Feel Well If Digestive Juices Are Failing," F. V. Co., Dept. M-J, 695 Washington St., New York. Absolutely **FREE.**

Copyright, 1940, Standard Brands Incorporated

SONG POEMS WANTED TO BE SET TO MUSIC

Free Examination. Send Your Poems to

J. CHAS. McNEIL

A. B. MASTER OF MUSIC

510-DA So. Alexandria

Los Angeles, Calif.

WE CAN GET YOUR BOOKS FOR LESS

Write us a card giving us the title of the book you want and we will advise you our price including postage.

M. L. SALES CO.

160 W. Broadway, Room 315

N. Y. C.

PILES: Misery GOES

2,000 TEST CASES PROVE IT!

Starting as it may seem, Only One 10-Minute Treatment

FREE PROOF was required in the majority of cases. **TRY IT AT MY RISK.** No pills, no suppositories or operation. Actual Facts. Proof and testimony from prominent people in my community to **PROVE** these claims sent **FREE** to you. Write **O. E. HENSCHKE**, 100 W. Chicago Ave., Dept. A-64, Chicago, Ill.

FREE ENLARGEMENT

Just to get acquainted with new customers, we will beautifully enlarge one snapshot print or negative, photo or picture to 8x10 inches—**FREE**—if you enclose this ad with 10c for handling and return mailing. Information on hand tinting in natural colors sent immediately. Your original returned with your free enlargement. Send it today.

Ceppert Studios, Dept. 185, Des Moines, Iowa

U.S. GOVERNMENT JOBS

START \$1260 TO \$2100 YEAR

Men—Women
Get ready
Immediately
Thousands
Appointments
Every Year

FRANKLIN INSTITUTE,
Dept. E215, Rochester, N. Y.
Write: Rush without charge (1) 32-page book with list of well paid U. S. Government jobs. (2) Tell me how to qualify for one.

Name _____
Address _____

Mail Coupon
today sure

(Continued from page 93)

A thought struck him. "Now I hope those two young fools that were here before didn't hang around!" he said worriedly. "No, no, of course not!" he added immediately. "They must have left. I put a good scare into both of them."

AT the same time, in that other world across the gulf of the fifth dimension, Terrance Hale was saying bitterly. "That's just the irony of our situation, that Dr. Vance doesn't know we're here, to rescue us. We might just as well be on Mars."

"Mars would probably be preferable," said Lona Darson resignedly. "We don't stand a chance here."

She had cried herself out and now faced the issue philosophically. They stood arm in arm near the spot where the laboratory had stood. It was about the center of the inimical ring of alien forest. Breathable air would remain here the longest.

But not for long. The taint of bromine was strong already. It stung their eyes and made their throats raw. The blue sun shone redly now through mists that were gathering thickly over them. Diffusion was steadily contaminating their pocket of earth-air that had come along with them. Deadly cyanogen was building up to fatal concentration.

Hale rebelled against the inevitable.

"Isn't there some way we could signal Dr. Vance?" he muttered.

"No," said Lona hopelessly. "Terry, we're unthinkable remote from our universe. That sun never was a star in earthly eyes, even with the biggest telescope. It's all so frightful . . ."

"How about this telepathy?" said Hale suddenly. "Maybe that's the one thing that can reach across this crazy dimension!"

"Terry, maybe you're right!" New hope flooded Lona's face. "It should be like a light signal across spatial dimensions. Let's try it! Suppose we concentrate on

gaining Dr. Vance's attention, by telepathy, and telling him we're here!"

With desperate enthusiasm they began sending a silent, mental call. "Dr. Vance! Dr. Vance! We are marooned in the earth-segment you sent into the Fifth Dimension. Terrance Hale and Lona Darrson. Please rescue us! Dr. Vance! Dr. Vance . . ."

They kept it up till the terrific strain made their brains reel. But no slightest indication came back to them that the scientist, incredibly remote in a different universe, had heard. Their voiceless message seemed to beat futilely into the bottomless depths of sheer endlessness.

"No answer!" moaned Lona after a time. "We should get an answer if we established any sort of rapport at all." She glanced at her companion hopelessly.

They tried some more, but knew, by a strange subtle sense, that their message was not being intercepted.

"No use," groaned Hale finally. He looked at the girl with dark-circled eyes. "This is all my fault, of course. Like a fool, I stayed around, after Dr. Vance's warning. Worst of all, I . . ." He coughed as a reeking cloud of brominated vapor billowed around them. "I got you into this, Lona. That makes me the prize ass of all the known and unknown universes there are!"

The girl pressed his arm. "Don't say that, Terry. I'm as responsible as you are. After all, I could have left. It was my own curiosity that made me stay."

"Thanks," said Hale simply.

A moment later he went on more slowly, and in lower tones. "You know, you hit me like a gold brick when I first saw you, Lona. That was only an hour ago, wasn't it?"

His voice was husky now. He wanted to go on, but he couldn't. Instead, he laughed crazily.

"I was just thinking," he said, "of what
(Continued on page 96)



THE EASY WAY TO POPULARITY

Here is a complete education for just a few cents. Amazes your friends and astounds the girls at parties and dances. Be able to protect yourself.

Swing Steps

Complete guide to swing dancing.

Tip Top Tapping

Simplified lessons in Tap dancing, for men and women.

How to Be a Detective

Criminal code and G-man methods — Complete and scientific Crime detection.

Police Jiu Jitsu

As taught to police, Marines, "G" men, Soldiers.

How to Dance

The new guide for self-instruction in the latest steps from square dancing to swing waltz.

Scientific Boxing

Includes Diet, fight training, K. O. punching, Ring Rules and ring history. Illustrated with slow motion movie strips.

Get These Profusely Illustrated Books at the Special Price of:

35c each — 3 for \$1.00 — or 6 for \$1.75

M. L. SALES CO., Dept. 7

Room 315, 160 W. Broadway, N. Y. C.

I enclose \$.....for which please send me the following books (check those you want).

- ☐ Tip Top Tapping
☐ How to Be a Detective
☐ How to Dance

- ☐ Swing Steps
☐ Police Jiu Jitsu
☐ Scientific Boxing

Name

Address

Appear **SLIMMER** ...immediately!



Wear the
VITO BELT
for 10 days at
our expense!

**Don't let your friends
poke fun at your "boy window"!**

■ If the Vito Belt does not make that paunchy belt line appear slimmer . . . it won't cost you a red cent! Whether "Nobody loves a fat man" is true or not, it is certain that no-one admires his appearance. If you want to have that well-set-up look, just get into a Vito Belt!

Safe Girth Control

■ Take care of that ugly paunch the safe way . . . with a Vito Belt. Excessive exercise may strain your heart, especially if you are over 40 . . . dieting and drugs may be dangerous. The Vito Belt not only gives you that military carriage and improves your appearance, but also brings welcome support.

Support with Comfort!

■ The Vito Belt is made of pure Para rubber, molded to give maximum support. Hundreds of tiny perforations allow air to penetrate to the skin surface, keeping it cool and helping to evaporate the body moisture. The special lace back permits you to adjust the belt to take care of any change in your size.



SAGGING ABDOMINAL WALLS MAY CAUSE TROUBLE

Waistline fat often stretches and weakens abdominal muscles, allowing stomach and intestines to fall forward and downward. When these muscles are comfortably supported you will feel more like going places and doing things.



MAKE A 10 DAY TEST...at our expense!

Don't Wait
MAIL
COUPON
NOW!

■ You'll never know what amazing results are possible until you wear the Vito Belt. You owe it to yourself to take advantage of our 10-day TRIAL offer.

VITO BELTS

HAMILTON BELT COMPANY, INC.
185 Hill Street, New Haven, Conn.

Gentlemen: Send me FREE illustrated folder describing the Vito Belt and giving full details of your Trial offer.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....

.....

96

Please mention DOUBLE ACTION GROUP when answering advertisements

(Continued from page 95)

my landlady will say when I don't show up. I owed her three weeks' rent!"

Lona shuddered. "Terry, please . . ."

They both began coughing wretchedly as the bromine taint became stronger. A moment later they were writhing on the ground. Their senses reeled from the poisons that were accumulating within their bodies. Each searing gasp of their lungs drew in more and brought the end closer.

Around them, the alien environment was relentlessly closing in. The trees and grasses from earth were already withering at the breath of gases their evolution had not equipped them to handle. Birds and insects dropped out of the trees and bushes. Soon the bit of earth that had been transplanted across the abyss of the Fifth Dimension would no longer harbor its life. It would become a graveyard, later to be choked with utterly alien life-forms.

Instinctively, the two humans clutched one another in their arms. Hale ground his teeth in the effort to regain a moment of rationality before death.

"Lona!" he gasped. "Just want to tell you . . . before we go . . . that I . . ."

A harsh cough rattled in his throat. "I know!" breathed Lona. Her lips were on his suddenly. For a brief moment, they forgot their pain and misery—and doom.

Then a choking current of gas swirled about their heads, tearing them apart like a jealous demon. They fell back, stricken and helpless.

Hale groaned mentally as he felt his mind reeling at the greater abyss of extinction. It was hell to die like this!—an ultrahell, when they were so young and had just found one another. They musn't die! It wasn't right. Wasn't there any way to signal the man who could rescue them? Telepathy! But they had tried and failed. His mind was slipping fast, if he couldn't remember . . .

"Half a car!" he yelled out, and then laughed madly. "Half a car! Half a car! Remember, Lona . . . just half a car!"

The girl, her mind just dropping into a vast black pool, was glad she would not hear any more in an instant, would not hear the man she loved rave insanely . . .

DR. VANCE struggled out of his smock. "Come on, Hans!" he said eagerly. "We'll go out and wander through the alien environment we plucked out of the Fifth Dimensional Continuum. That will be a thrill never before experienced by man—and without the slightest bit of danger!"

Hans followed the scientist somewhat reluctantly. He was still trembling at the impact of the alien scene on his imaginative mind.

They stepped from the little fringe of normal ground to the soil of the other world. It was slippery and they had to move along carefully. It glowed oddly by its own phosphorescence wherever shade hid the sun.

"Radioactive stuff!" said Dr. Vance happily. "What luck! I'll have the radioactive element extracted and sell it. My funds have become pretty low with all the expense of this experiment. And incidentally, I'll also get the Nobel Prize for this!" He let out a boyish whoop. "Hurray for the Fifth Dimension!"

But Hans was not so enthusiastic. His face looked oddly reflective.

"Why have you got that sour look?" snapped Dr. Vance. "What's worrying you now? I never knew a man who could find more things to worry about . . ."

Hans spoke slowly. "I was just wondering. Suppose those two young people *did* get transported! Wouldn't it be horrible?"

"For heaven's sake," retorted the scientist. "Don't keep bringing that up. That's all you've been saying for the past half hour." He went on sarcastically. "Are

(Concluded on page 98)

WE MATCH PANTS
To Any Suit
 Double the life of your coat and vest with correctly matched pants. 100,000 patterns. Every pair hand tailored to your measure. Our match sent FREE for your O. K. before pants are made. Fit guaranteed. Send piece of cloth or vest to us today.
SUPERIOR MATCH PANTS COMPANY
 209 S. State St. Dept. 845 Chicago

Is Your Rupture HERE?

Why continue to suffer with rupture? Stop your worries and fears. Send for the facts about my perfected truss invention—the Brooks Appliance for reducible rupture—with the automatic AIR-CUSHION support that gives Nature a chance to close the opening. Thousands bought by doctors for themselves and patients.



Sent on Trial—Made-to-measure, individual fitting for men, women or child. Low-priced, sanitary, durable. No chafing springs or hard pads; no metal girdles to rust. Safe and comfortable. Helps Nature get results. Not sold through stores—beware of imitations. Write today for full information sent free in plain sealed envelope.

BROOKS APPLIANCE CO. 421-8 State St. Marshall, Mich.

**Muddy Skin
Blemishes
Blackheads
Blotches**

HOMELY SURFACE PIMPLES

To the thousands of folks suffering from surface pimples, acne, muddy complexion, skin eruptions, etc., we will send FREE booklet of a simple method of treating the skin. A noted dermatologist's private method. No harmful medicine, skin peel, diet, etc. Something different. Send to Dr. W. D. Tracy Co., 1637 A4 New Haven, Conn.

WANTED

ORIGINAL SONG POEMS
 any subject, for musical setting. Publication, Radio and Recording service. Don't delay—send us your poem for immediate consideration.

RICHARD BROS., 147 Woods Building, Chicago, Ill.

See
**WOODSTOCK
TYPEWRITERS**

Quit Using Tobacco!

Write for Free Booklet and Learn How.
 Results Guaranteed or Money Refunded.

NEWELL PHARMACAL COMPANY
 70 Clayton Station. St. Louis, Mo.

**100,000
Satisfied
Users**

USED Correspondence Courses

Complete Home-Study Courses and educational books, slightly used. Sold, rented, exchanged. All subjects. Money-back guarantee. Cash paid for used courses. Full details and illustrated 72-page bargain catalog FREE. Write today! **NELSON CO., Dept. G-231, 600 Sherman, Chicago.**

(Continued from page 97)

you still getting that telepathic message? What does it say?"

"Yes, I'm still getting it. I believe it's they. But I can't make it out." Hans' face was serious and puzzled.

"Oh, forget it, Hans!" scoffed the scientist. "Of course they aren't there. Now don't mention that again."

But Hans continued to be reflective. He began to act dazed, and wandered around as though searching for something. He held up his head at times, listening.

He wandered rather far from the scientist. Suddenly something riveted his attention. He ran toward it. A moment later his wild shout startled Dr. Vance from his close examination of a queer, spiny plant. The scientist hurried to him.

"Look!" pointed Hans, at the edge of the alien jungle.

"Good Lord!" gasped Dr. Vance. "Then . . ."

He broke off and ran toward their laboratory faster than he had ever run since his youth. Hans was right behind him. Panting, the two men made frantic adjustments of their apparatus. Finally Dr. Vance threw the master switch and the odd mirrors at the top of their tower bathed the surrounding area in a spectrum glow. Telekinetic energy sprang into being, forming a pathway between two universes.

TERRANCE HALE opened his eyes, closed them, opened them again—and grinned. At a glance he had seen that he was on earth and that Lona Darson was

alive with him and smiling. They were lying on couches in Dr. Vance's living quarters, with the little scientist hovering over them nervously. He was waving ammoniated spirits under their noses alternately.

"Thank God you're alive!" said Dr. Vance hoarsely. "We got you back just in time. That must have been a horrible experience in that alien world . . ." He shuddered.

"I wouldn't have missed it for the world!" said Hale. "Lona and I . . . up there . . . well, anyway, this will mean a whale of a story . . . and a raise for me. By the way" . . . he turned his head to the girl . . . "does what I said in the Fifth Dimension go here on earth?"

Lona reached for his hand. "No, silly. You have to say it all over again!" She became serious. "But how were we saved? I don't understand. Did our telepathic message work through after all?"

"Not to me," said Dr. Vance.

Hans spoke eagerly. "A telepathic message came through to me. I couldn't understand it at first. I finally caught on. It said 'half a car!' Half a car!' When I saw the half a car at the edge of the jungle, I knew."

"Just as I figured," Hale murmured. "The first message was too complicated. I knew that if I could once get that simple thought of half a car across, and they investigated, they wouldn't be able to doubt what it meant."

He sighed contentedly. "As I was saying, Lona—"

LOOK FOR THIS INSIGNIA



FOR THE BEST IN POPULAR FICTION

BACKACHE?

Try Flushing Excess Poisons
And Acid Thru Kidneys
And Stop Getting Up Nights

35 CENTS PROVES IT

When your kidneys are overtaxed and your bladder is irritated and passage scanty and often smart and burns, you may need Gold Medal Haaslem Oil Capsules, a fine harmless stimulant and diuretic that starts to work at once and costs but 35 cents at any modern drugstore.

It's one good safe way to put more healthy activity into kidneys and bladder—you should sleep more soundly the whole night through. But be sure to get **GOLD MEDAL**—it's a genuine medicine for weak kidneys—right from Haaslem in Holland. Don't accept a substitute.



FALSE TEETH

AS LOW AS \$7.95

See Plate. Dental plates are made in our own laboratory from your personal impression.

WORKMANSHIP and Material **GUARANTEED** or PURCHASE PRICE REFUNDED. We take this risk on our 60-Day Trial Offer. **DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY** Mail post card for **FREE** material and catalog of our **LOW PRICES**. **DON'T PUT IT OFF**—Write us today! Supervised By A Dentist. **BRIGHTON-THOMAS DENTAL LABORATORY (INC.)** DEPT. 158 4317 S. HALSTED STREET, CHICAGO, ILL.



Quit Using Tobacco!

Write for Free Booklet and Learn How. Results Guaranteed or Money Refunded.
NEWELL PHARMACAL COMPANY
PO Clayton Station, St. Louis, Mo.

**100,000
Satisfied
Users**

Free for Asthma

If you suffer with attacks of Asthma so terrible you choke and gasp for breath, if restful sleep is impossible because of the struggle to breathe, if you feel the disease is slowly wearing your life away, don't fail to send at once to the Frontier Asthma Co. for a free trial of a remarkable method. No matter where you live or whether you have any faith in any remedy under the sun, send for this free trial. If you have suffered a lifetime and tried everything you could learn of without relief; even if you are utterly discouraged, do not abandon hope but send today for this free trial. It will cost you nothing. Address **Frontier Asthma Co.** 179-F Frontier Bldg. 462 Niagara St., Buffalo, N. Y.

ELECTRICITY

"LEARN BY DOING"
12 weeks training



**I'LL FINANCE
YOUR TRAINING!**

My new Free Book tells you how to make you in 12 weeks—in start in the growing field of electricity. You can learn to work on real electrical machinery—not by books or correspondence. Amazing plan enables many to get training free... then take 10 months to pay in small monthly payments starting 5 months from date you start school. Experience or advanced education not needed. **Many Earn While Learning.** Free lifetime employment service. **Classical Training, Radio, Electric Refrigeration and Air Conditioning** included. **MAIL COUPON FOR FREE BOOK AND ALL FACTS.**

H. C. LEWIS, President, COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL
400 E. Paulina St., Dept. 10-26 Chicago, Illinois

Send free book with **FACTS** on Coyne, the **Pay After Graduation** plan, and extra 4 weeks **Radio Course** now included.

NAME _____ AGE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

HAY-FEVER Quick Relief

Clarke's New Discovery Guaranteed. Prevents and relieves Suffering without medicine or injections. Send 3c stamp for details. Prove it yourself!

CLARKE RESEARCH LABORATORY

363-C N. E. 76th Street Miami, Florida

FINAL SALE RUSH!

ONLY \$6.98—Double Action Revolver, costs \$12 elsewhere. 20, 32 or 38 cal. Nickel or Blue. Brand new. Powerful. Guaranteed 5 years. Ideal for target practice. 3 to 6 in. bbl. Send \$1 with order. Cartridge for cash in full. Order today. **Revolver, \$1.50. 6 in. bbl. 50c extra.**



Winchester Co., Box 30, Woodbine, Penna.

AVIATION APPRENTICES AIR-MINDED YOUNG MEN, interested in training for entering Aviation as Apprentices. Write immediately, enclosing stamp. **Mechanix Universal Aviation Service** Wayne County Airport Dept. 5 Detroit, Mich.

ROLLS DEVELOPED

25c Color. Two 5 x 7 Double Weight Professional Enlargements, 8 Gloss Prints.

CLUB PHOTO SERVICE, Dept. 25, LaCrosse, Wis.

CASH FOR UNUSED STAMPS

U. S. unused postage paid at 90% face value for denominations 1/2c to 19c, 85% face value for denominations 20c to 50c. Small lots 85% face value. **MAIL STAMPS REGISTERED.** Money sent by return mail. **GARBER SERVICE, 96 6th Ave., Dept. D-7, N. Y. C.**

**Always Look for the
DOUBLE ACTION DIAMOND**

**WILL YOU WEAR THIS SUIT
and Make up to \$12 in a Day!**

Let us send you a fine all-wool suit tailored with **FREE OF ONE PENNY COST.** Just follow our easy plan and wear the suit to your friends. Make up to \$12 in a day easily. **Partial Payment Plan.** No experience—no house-to-house canvassing necessary.

Send for Samples—FREE OF COST

Write today for **FREE** details. **ACTUAL SAMPLES** and "new-look" money-getting plan, book, and more.
W. J. Collins, PROGRESS TAILORING CO.
500 S. Thrope St., Dept. 8-245, Chicago, Illinois

Partial Payment Plan Free \$100

GRAVITY OFF!

by
LESLIE F.
STONE

Jerry Moore delved just a little too deeply into science—so that he found his gravity reversed—making a living in a circus side-show as the "Upside-Down Man!" But he considers ending his misery by simply walking over the ceiling to an open door—and falling into the sky!



“**H**ERE you are, folks, here you are! Come and see the *MAN WHO FALLS*

UP IN THE AIR! The Wonder Man. The Phenomenon of the Centuries! The Man Who Walks on Ceilings! Ten cents, folks, one slim dime to see the Scientific Marvel of the Ages. In India they do it with a rope. *He* does it with his *Mind!* Come one, come all, see the Great White Yogi defy the *Laws of Gravity* without mechanical aid!

“It’s Astounding! It’s Educational! Bring the children to see this modern wonder. Show starts in two minutes. Don’t miss it, folks. See this Marvelous Dem-

The Yogi went through the motions of climbing up a rope!



onstration of Mental Powers. *He's not a freak, ladies and gentlemen, it's all done with the mind!* One dime, one slim dime. Don't miss it, don't miss it, don't miss it!"

The midway barker's mechanical drone went on and on, and men, women and children crowded around the ticket seller's booth under a crude lithograph dangling in the sunlight in front of an unusually proportioned tent. Its base was a hundred feet square, but it rose high into the air, a hundred and fifty feet above the Midway, long guy ropes holding it in place. The crowd thickened, shoving and pushing its way inside the tent.

Across the way another barker, megaphone hanging listlessly from his hand, leaned on a prop, one foot swinging free, watched the shoving crowd with jaundiced eye. Behind him stood another tent with a half-dozen or more garish drawings depicting a half dozen or more freakish-looking creatures, while on a small square platform beside him three bepainted, bedizened, scantily clad houri from the East (Side) jiggled to the tinpany tune of a phonograph, moving arms and legs in a negligible wiggle.

They, too, watched people pause and stare at the brilliant lithograph before the rival tent. It depicted a man calmly eating at a table that, apparently, along with the chair in which he sat, hung from the ceiling of the painted room. At least, that was the impression it conveyed, that the man was sitting up-side down! To make certain one understood what was intended, another man stood at the bottom of the picture, right side up.

The houri nearest the freak-tent barker spoke from the corner of her red-smeared mouth. "What a take that guy's got. It's a natural if ever I saw one. They say he's cleaning up every midway. I think I'll go see him next show . . ."

Her answer was a growl; the speller still eyed the pushing crowd. Suddenly, he straightened. At the entrance of the rival

tent had been hung a sign. "TENT FULL. NEXT SHOW—TWENTY MINUTES!"

Disappointed persons looked at the sign and glanced at the freak-tent barker as he began. "Here you are, folks, the greatest collection of freaks ever brought together under one tent. See Jim-Jim, the eat-em-alive-man. Eats snakes in front of your eyes! It's no fake, it's the real thing! Come . . ."

Within the tent of the Upside-Down Man people elbowed for room. Before them stood a six foot high wooden platform holding a large curtained box, twenty feet high. Beside it, on a small table was a phonograph, a bottled drink, and some wrapped sandwiches. Tacked on front of the platform was a small bulletin board with several notices pinned on it. One of these was signed by the town's mayor, the other by the chief of police.

Both notices were statements to the effect that the mayor and chief of police had been present at the erection of the tent, that they had seen no buried machines, no contrivances of any kind installed, and that the platform was built of ordinary lumber with no place for concealed wires.

LOOKING above, the people found the Lupper part of the tent shrouded in darkness. On one canvas wall hung a rope ladder, and beside it an inch-thick rope that rose into the overhead obscurity.

The tent was full to capacity; people were packed in like sardines. Children whimpered in the close quarters when from between the curtains a brisk, close-shaven man with graying hair stepped forward. He looked the crowd over and spoke.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," he began pleasantly, "the young man with the megaphone outside explained this isn't a 'freak show.' That's correct. The White Yogi, friends, isn't a freak. He was not born this way! The feats you will see performed in a few moments are feats of scientific achievement. As you all know, in India



World's Greatest Collection of Strange & Secret Photographs

NOW you can travel round the world with the most daring adventures. You can see with your own eyes, the weirdest peoples on earth. You witness the strangest customs of the red, white, brown, black and yellow races. You attend their startling rites, their mysterious practices. They are all assembled for you in these five great volumes of the **SECRET MUSEUM OF MANKIND**.

600 LARGE PAGES

Here is the world's Greatest Collection of Strange and Secret Photographs. Here are Exotic Photos from Europe. Primitive Photos from Africa. Torture Photos from Asia. Female Photos from Oceania and America, and hundreds of others. There are almost 800 LARGE PAGES OF STRANGE AND SECRET PHOTOGRAPHS, each page 8 1/2 square inches in size.

1,000 REVEALING PHOTOS

You see actual courtship practiced in every quarter of the world. You see magic and mystery in queer lands where the foot of a white man has rarely trod. You see Oriental modes of marriage and female slavery in China, Japan, India, etc. Through the intimacy of the camera you witness the exotic habits of every continent and the strangest customs of life and love in America, Europe, etc. You are bewildered by three large pages of **ONE THOUSAND PHOTOGRAPHS**, including 100 full-page photos, and distilled by the hundreds of short stories that describe them.

5 PICTURE-PACKED VOLUMES

Specimen Photos

Dress & Undress Round the World
Various Secret Societies
Civilized Love vs. Savage Strange Crimes, Criminals
Omens, Totems & Taboos
Mysterious Customs
1,000 Strange & Secret Photos

The **SECRET MUSEUM OF MANKIND** consists of five picture-packed volumes (each bound together for convenient reading). Dip into any one of these volumes, and as you turn its pages, you find it difficult to tear yourself away. Here, in story and unusual photos, is the world's greatest collection of **STRANGE AND SECRET PHOTOGRAPHS**, containing everything from Female Beauty Round the World to the most mysterious Gulls and Customs. These hundreds and hundreds of large pages will give you days and nights of thrilling instruction.

Contents of 5-Volume Set

- VOLUME 1
The Secret Album of Africa
- VOLUME 2
The Secret Album of Europe
- VOLUME 3
The Secret Album of Asia
- VOLUME 4
The Secret Album of America
- VOLUME 5
The Secret Album of Oceania

SEND NO MONEY

Simply sign and mail the coupon. Remember, each of the 5 volumes is 8 1/2 inches high, and opened over a foot wide! Remember also that this 5-volume set formerly sold for \$10. And it is bound in expensive "life-time" cloth. Don't put this off. Fill out the coupon, drop it in the next mail, and receive this huge work at once.

**FORMERLY \$10
NOW ONLY
\$1.98**
FOR THE COMPLETE
5 VOLUME SET

ALL FIVE
VOLUMES
BOUND
TOGETHER

METRO PUBLICATIONS
70 5th Ave., Dept. 507, New York.

Send me "The Secret Museum of Mankind" (5 great volumes bound together). I will pay postman \$1.98, plus postage on arrival. If not delighted, will return book in 5 days for full refund of \$1.98.

Name

Address

City

☐ CHECK RETURN if you are enclosing \$1.98, thus saving mailing costs. Save Money-Back Guarantee.
Canadian Orders—\$2.50 in Advance.

there are men known as Yogi, men who devote all their lives to a contemplation of the life-forces, and it was among them that the White Yogi studied and learned the secret of his accomplishment, the defiance of the Laws of Gravity!

"The Great Einstein, folks, teaches us that gravitation is the result of a warp in Space, a force responding to no other force, and is unchanging, unchangeable, and so powerful a force that it bends light! Yet, here, Ladies and Gentlemen is a man who controls the uncontrollable force with his mind! **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I GIVE YOU THE WHITE YOGI!**"

With that, the speaker waved his hand, the curtain behind him flipped aside to reveal a queer-looking chamber. It was twenty feet high with three solid walls and was furnished exactly like a bedroom, with bed, table and chair. In the side wall was an ordinary door with an ordinary door-knob. What made the room unique, however, was the fact that it was *upside-down*; the furniture was nailed to the ceiling; the bedclothing was tied to the bed! The door, likewise, was upside-down, its sill being even with the room's ceiling—or rather the floor.

The chamber was not empty. On the floor of the stage in ordinary position stood a small nondescript looking thin man of about twenty-eight or nine. He stood in the center of the floor, feet firmly planted as he made a slight bow and scanned the audience.

Somehow, that man presented a pitiful object; he had the saddest blue eyes anyone had ever seen. Peculiarly he was blushing; his face was a warm red!

The announcer spoke from the side of the platform. "The White Yogi is ready to demonstrate his powers. Yogi, will you show these good people how you ascend to your bedchamber?"

The man smiled, stooped and untied his shoes! Then, without apparent effort, with

(Continued on page 104)

A Money-Making Opportunity for Men of Character

EXCLUSIVE FRANCHISE FOR
AN INVENTION EXPECTED TO REPLACE
A MULTI-MILLION-DOLLAR INDUSTRY

Costly Work Formerly
"Sent Out" by Business Men
Now Done by Themselves
at a Fraction of the Expense

This is a call for men everywhere to handle exclusive agency for one of the most unique business inventions of the day.

Forty years ago the horse and buggy business was supreme—today almost extinct. Twenty years ago the phonograph industry ran into many millions—today practically a relic. Only a comparatively few foresighted men saw the fortunes ahead in the automobile and the radio. Yet irresistible waves of public buying swept these men to fortune, and sent the buggy and the phonograph into the discard. So are great successes made by men able to detect the shift in public favor from one industry to another.

Now another change is taking place. An old established industry—an integral and important part of the nation's structure—in which millions of dollars change hands every year—is in thousands of cases being replaced by a truly astonishing, simple invention which does the work better—more reliably—AND AT A COST OFTEN AS LOW AS 25¢. **OR WHAT IS ORDINARILY PAID!** It has not required very long for men who have taken over the rights to this valuable invention to do a remarkable business, and show earnings which in these times are almost unheard of for the average man.

Not a "Gadger"—
Not a "Knick-Knack"—

but a valuable, proved device which has been sold successfully by business novices as well as seasoned veterans.

Make no mistake—this is no novelty—no fiasco created which the inventor hopes to put on the market. You probably have seen nothing like it yet—perhaps never dreamed of the existence of such a device—yet it has already been used by corporations of outstanding prominence—by dealers of great corporations—in their branches—by doctors, newspaper, publishers—schools—hospitals, etc., etc., and by thousands of small business men. You don't have to convince a man that he should use an electric light to light his office instead of a gas lamp. Nor do you have to sell the same business man the idea that some day he may need something like this invention. The need is already there—the money is usually being spent right at that very moment—and the desirability of saving the gross part of this expense is obvious immediately.

Some of the Savings
You Can Show

You walk into a sales office and put down before your prospect a letter from a sales organization showing that they did work in their own office for \$11 which formerly could have cost them over \$300. A building supply corporation pays our men \$70, whereas the bill could have been for \$5,000! An automobile dealer pays our representative \$15, whereas the expense could have been over \$1,000. A department store has expense of \$85.00, possible cost if done outside the business being well over \$2,000. And so on. We could not possibly list all cases here. There are just a few of the many actual cases which we place in your hands to work with. Practically every line of business and every section of the country is represented by these field reports which hammer across dealerships, convincing money-saver opportunities which hardly any business man can fail to understand.

Profits Typical of
the Young, Growing Industry

Going into this business is not like selling something offered in every grocery, drug or department store. For instance, when you take a \$7.50 order, \$5.83 can be your share. On \$1,500 worth of business, your share can be \$1,167.00. The very least you get as your part of every dollar's worth of business you do is 67 cents on ten dollars' worth \$6.70, on a hundred dollars' worth \$67.00—in other words two thirds of every order you get is yours. Not only on the first order—but on repeat orders—and you have the opportunity of earning an even larger percentage.

This Business Has
Nothing to Do With
House to House Canvassing

Nor do you have to know anything about high-pressure selling. "Selling" is unnecessary in the ordinary sense of the word. Instead of hammering away at the customer and trying to "force" a sale, you make a dignified, business-like call, leave the installation—whatever size the customer says he will accept—at our risk, let the customer sell himself after the device is in and working. This does away with the need for pressure on the customer—it eliminates the handicap of trying to get the money before the customer has really convinced himself 100%. You simply tell what you offer, showing proof of success in their customer's particular line of business. Then leave the invention without a dollar down. It starts working at once. In a few short days, the installation should actually produce enough money to pay for the deal, with profits above the investment coming in at the same time. You then call back, collect your money. Nothing is so convincing as our offer to let results speak for themselves without risk to the customer. While others fail to get even a hearing, our men are making sales running into the hundreds. They have received the attention of the largest firms in the country, and sold up to the smallest businesses by the thousands.

EARNINGS

One man in California earned over \$1,600 per month for three months—close to \$5,000 in 30 days' time. Another writes from Delaware—"Since I have been operating (just a little less than a month of actual selling) and not the full day at that, because I have been getting organized and had to spend at least half the day in the office; counting what I have sold outright and on trial, I have made just a little in excess of one thousand dollars profit for one month." A man working small city in N. Y. State made \$10,805 in 9 months. Texas man nets over \$300 in less than a week's time. Space does not permit mentioning here more than these four random cases. However, they are sufficient to indicate that the worthwhile future in this business is coupled with immediate earnings for the right kind of man. One man with us has already made over a thousand sales on which his earnings ran from \$5 to \$60 per sale and more. A great deal of this business was repeat business. Yet he had never done anything like this before coming with us. That is the kind of opportunity this business offers. The fact that this business has attracted to it such business men as former bankers, executives of businesses—men who demand only the highest type of opportunity and income—gives a fairly good picture of the kind of business this is. Our door is open, however, to the young man looking for the right field in which to make his start and develop his future.

No Money Need Be Risked

In trying this business out. You can measure the possibilities and not be out a dollar. If you are looking for a business that is not overworked—a business that is just coming into its own—on the upgrade, instead of the downgrade—a business that offers the buyer relief from a burdensome, but unavoidable expense—a business that has a prospect practically in every office, store, or factory into which you can set foot—regardless of size—that is a security but does not have any price ceiling to contend with as other necessities do—that because you control the sales in exclusive territory is your own business—that pays more on some individual sales than many men make in a week and sometimes in a month's time—if such a business looks as if it is worth investigating, get in touch with us at once for the rights in your territory—don't delay—because the chances are that if you do wait, someone else will have written to us in the meantime—and if it turns out that you were the better man—we'd both be sorry. So for convenience, are the sales field—let send it right away—or write if you wish. But do not come. Address

F. E. ARMSTRONG, President
Dept. 4013-G, Mobile, Ala.

**RUSH FOR EXCLUSIVE
TERRITORY PROPOSITION**

F. E. ARMSTRONG, Pres., Dept. 4013-G, Mobile, Ala.
Without obligation to us, send me full information on your proposition.

Name _____
Street or Route _____
Box No. _____
City _____
State _____

Please mention DOUBLE ACTION GROUP when answering advertisements

(Continued from page 102)

hands held above his head, *he surged upward with a rush!* There was a thud, and the whole unusual room shook to his impact—*his upraised arms bent as he caught his weight upon his hands.* So would a man's arms bend if he dropped from the same height to the ground!

The spileer went behind the room coming back with a ladder. *While the White Yogi hung from the ceiling of his room, feet dangling toward the floor,* the spileer called for volunteers to climb to the top of the chamber and examine it for a possible hidden machine responsible for the White Yogi's unique position.

Four self-conscious men came forward, stating they did not belong to the show, and climbed the ladder. A few moments later they came down to testify that there wasn't a thing on the roof at all.

As this went on, the upside-down man held his place, his face grew redder and redder and the cords of his neck strained to his effort!

The man on the platform spoke. "All right, Yogi."

With that, the Yogi raised his feet, and the next instant stood in the center of the upside-down room grinning an upside-down grin at the audience as he flexed muscles and breathed heavily from his exertions. Still panting, he walked to a chair and sat down, head pointing toward the ground while the red in his face subsided. Taking out a cigarette, he put it to his lips and lighted it.

"How about a sandwich? You hungry?"

For the first time the upside-down man spoke. "Right—and send up a bottle of pop, Mr. Bolton."

Taking a sandwich and the bottle from the nearby table, Mr. Bolton spilled some of the liquid from the bottle to show that it was full, climbed a chair and handed it to the Yogi. He quickly ate the sandwich and tipped his head backward to drink the soda from the bottle. He passed back the empty bottle.

Now he went through a prescribed routine, walking around the upside-down room, sitting at a table to take out paper and pen from a drawer and write a few lines upon it. Next, he went to the bed and laid up upon its covers.

"You'll notice, ladies and gentlemen," said Bolton, "the Yogi lies upon his bed as much at ease as you and I lie on an ordinary bed. Yogi, will you rise and let these people see the indentation your head made upon the pillow?"

The Yogi complied and the people exclaimed aloud at what they saw. Slowly, the pillow returned to its original position, hanging down in accordance with gravity.

"Yogi, will you give us a dance?" Going to the phonograph, the spileer put on a tune and the man on the ceiling went into a short dance routine that elicited some response from his audience.

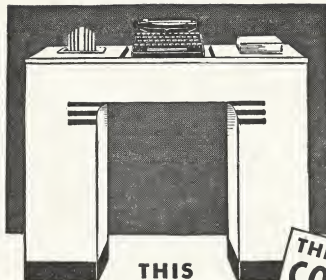
The record was turned off. "And now, good people, the Yogi will give you a demonstration of a *man falling up into the air!*—together with his own interpolation of the Hindu Rope-Trick! In India, folks, the Yogi project a rope into the air without support so that a child can climb the rope. The White Yogi does something else.

"Yogi, will you kindly step out of your bedroom?"

The upside-down man crossed the "floor" of his chamber to its door. He turned the knob and let the door swing outward with himself clinging to it, *his feet dangling up into the air!*

A GAIN the announcer spoke at length. "As you people no doubt know, the velocity of a falling body continually increases by 32 feet per second in each second of the fall. This fall is calculated at approximately 16 feet in the first second, 48 feet in the second second, 80 feet in the third second, and so on. From the Yogi's present position he is about 125 feet from the top of this tent; therefore, he will reach

(Continued on page 106)



THIS BEAUTIFUL DESK FOR \$1.00

WITH ANY

REMINGTON PORTABLE TYPEWRITER

A beautiful desk in a neutral blue-green—trimmed in black and silver—made of sturdy fibre board—now available for only one dollar (\$1.00) to purchasers of a Remington Deluxe Noiseless Portable Typewriter. The desk is so light that it can be moved anywhere without trouble. It will hold six hundred (600) pounds. This combination gives you a miniature office at home. Mail the coupon today.

THESE EXTRAS FOR YOU LEARN TYPING FREE

To help you even further, you get Free with this special offer a 24-page booklet, prepared by experts, to teach you quickly how to typewrite by the touch method. When you buy a Noiseless you get this free Remington Rand gift that increases the pleasure of using your Remington Deluxe Noiseless Portable. Remember, the touch typing book is sent Free while this offer holds.

SPECIAL CARRYING CASE

The Remington Deluxe Noiseless Portable is light in weight, easily carried about. With this offer Remington supplies a beautiful carrying case sturdily built of 3-ply wood bound with a special Dupont Fabric.

SPECIFICATIONS

ALL ESSENTIAL FEATURES of large standard office machines appear in the Noiseless Deluxe Portable—standard 4-row keyboard, back spacer; margin stops and margin release; double shift key; two color ribbon and automatic reverse; variable line spacer; paper fingers; makes as many as seven carbons; takes paper 9.5" wide; writes lines 8.2" wide, black key cards and white letters, rubber cushioned feet.

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

The Remington Noiseless Deluxe Portable Typewriter is sold on a trial basis with a money-back guarantee. If, after ten days' trial, you are not entirely satisfied, we will take it back, paying all shipping charges and refunding your good will deposit at once. You take no risk.



ACT NOW!
ON THIS BARGAIN
OFFER.

**THE
COMBINATION
FOR AS LITTLE AS 10c A DAY**

How easy it is to pay for this combination. Just imagine! A small good will deposit and terms as low as 10c a day to get this combination at once. You will never miss 10c a day. Become immediately the possessor of this combination. You assume no obligation by sending the coupon.



SEND COUPON

NOW!

Remington Rand Inc. Dept 164-7
465 Washington St., Buffalo, N. Y.

Tell me, without obligation, how to get a Free Trial of a new Remington Noiseless Deluxe Portable, including Carrying Case and Free Typing Booklet, for as little as 10c a day. Send Catalogue.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....

Please mention DOUBLE ACTION GROUP when answering advertisements

(Continued from page 104)

the top in less than four and a half seconds. For those wishing to verify this, take out your watches while the Yogi performs this unusual feat of *falling against the Force of Gravity!*

"Are you ready, Yogi?"

"Ready!"

At the last cry, lights went on in the top of the tent which looked even higher from the inside than it had outside.

"GO!"

At the signal, the White Yogi let go his hold on the doorknob, and in one upward surge, rushed toward the top of the tent!

He struck the canvas with such force that the entire structure swayed back and forth ominously. Bolton shouted for the people to remain calm, that the tent was braced for that impact, just as the tent top was provided with springs for the benefit of the *man who had fallen upon it.*

Straining their necks upward, the people saw the man who had flattened against the tent-top sit himself up—upside-down, of course, and climb to his feet.

Walking to the side wall, he took hold of the rope fastened to the side of the rope-ladder, freed it, and held the end in his hand for all to see.

Again Bolton spoke. "The White Yogi wants you to know the rope he is holding isn't fastened at either end. He will now lower his end of the rope to us to prove to you all the rope is free. When he has the other end of the rope in his hands, he will come down!"

They watched the upside-down man pay out the rope, and as one end came in reach of the platform, the announcer called for two strong volunteers to grab it and "hang on to it for dear life!"

He turned to the audience. "Remember, folks, that rope is not suspended in any way. It is the Yogi alone who holds it upright! As he comes toward us, you'll see the other end of the rope drop downward; the Yogi alone holds it up!" He called out.

"All right, Yogi, start coming!"

Obedying him, the Yogi went through the motions of a man *climbing up a rope!*—using hands and knees as the free end of the rope slowly snaked downward from between his thighs. The two men held its lower end grimly. Once or twice Bolton put a hand to it to keep them from being lifted off their feet! "Thought you were strong men!" he laughed at them.

It was as if a tremendous weight strained on that rope to pull them upward!

When the Yogi was half-way down, the free end of the rope reached the platform. A handler came from behind the stage to grab it and coil it on the floor as it dropped.

At last the upside-down man "climbed" to the level of the stage room. Reaching out, he took hold of the open door, dropped the rest of the rope and swung himself into the room, walking again on its upside-down room.

Breathing hard, he smiled at the audience, giving them a wide upside-down grin as he waved his hand. The curtain came together and the people were hurried outdoors to make room for those collecting outside the tent. The helper ran up the rope-ladder to refasten the long rope in place again at the top, turning off the flood-lights a little later.

Slipping behind the curtains of the stage, the speiler came into the upside-down room. Above him the Yogi was seated in his chair smoking.

"Say, Frank," the "Yogi" said as he appeared, "We've got to change that routine a little. Let me get 'upright' before you send the men to examine the roof. It gives me a headache standing on my head so long! I told you I didn't think that idea would work out."

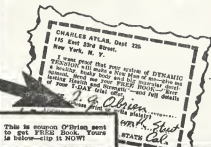
Frank Bolton nodded. "All right, Jerry, but for heaven's sake, wipe that goofy expression off your face next show. It keeps getting worse. You look like a sick cat the way you stare at people!"

(Continued on page 108)

HE Mailed This Coupon

J. G. O'BRIEN

Atlas Champion
Cup Winner
This is an ordinary
snapshot of one of
Charles Atlas' Cal-
ifornia pupils.



...and Here's the Handsome Prize-Winning Body I Gave Him!

J. G. O'BRIEN saw my coupon. He clipped and mailed it. He got my free book and followed my instructions. He became a New Man—and also won one of my Atlas-Champion, Sterling Silver Cups for his physical improvement. NOW read what he says:

"Look at me NOW! Dynamic Tension WORKS! I'm proud of the natural, easy way you have made me an 'Atlas Champion'!"—J. G. O'Brien.

Let Me Prove I Can Make You a New Man

Would you like to have a handsome build—greater physical development—a strong, muscular body? Then listen to this:

I, myself was once a skinny weakling of 97 lbs. I didn't know what real health or strength were. I was afraid to fight, ashamed to be seen in a swimming suit.

Then I discovered the secret that changed me into "The

World's Most Perfectly Developed Man," the title I won twice and have held ever since, against all comers. My

secret is Dynamic Tension. It is a natural method. Its purpose is not only to give you the powerful, ripping muscles you'd like to see in your own mirror, but also for those whose systems are sluggish from lack of proper exercise—to help them tone up their entire body, inside and out.

Accept My 7-Day Trial Offer

Do you want a better build? Are you dissatisfied with your present physical development? All I ask is a 7-DAY TRIAL. Just one week! In even that short time you will notice your chest hardening and filling out with solid muscle—or the 7-

Day Trial costs you nothing. Surely this is proof that by continuing with my "Dynamic Tension" method I will make you a New Man—give you bodily power and drive, and put you in magnificent physical condition which wins you the envy and respect of everyone.

FREE BOOK On Dynamic Tension

Let me show you the results produced for other men! I'll send you FREE my famous book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." It shows actual photos. Write your name and address carefully on coupon. Mail to me personally today. I'll rush your free copy to you AT ONCE! Charles Atlas, Dept. 47, 115 East 23rd Street, New York, N. Y.



CHARLES ATLAS

An untouched photo of Charles Atlas, twice winner of the title "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

 ■ **CHARLES ATLAS**
 ■ Dept. 47, 115 East 23rd Street,
 ■ New York, N. Y.
 ■ I want the proof that your system of Dynamic
 ■ Tension will help make me a New Man—give me
 ■ a healthy, husky body and big muscle develop-
 ■ ment. Send me your FREE book, "Everlasting
 ■ Health and Strength," and full details about your
 ■ 7-DAY Trial Offer.
 ■ Name
 ■ (Please print or write plainly)
 ■ Address
 ■ City State

Please mention DOUBLE ACTION GROUP when answering advertisements

(Continued from page 106)

THE upside-down man grunted. "Sorry. But, you know, when I begin to think of those people walking around on the good earth as they please, it gets me! But for two years, I've watched them go away from here to comfortable, ordinary homes, sitting down at an ordinary table and eating *right-side up* while I've got to go 'home' to my upside-down trailer, sleep under blankets pinned to my bed with cold air whistling up my back where the covers drag away from me! God, what would it feel like to take a bath without almost drowning myself! I tell you—it—it's—oh, what's the use . . .?"

"Aw, forget it, kid. Look at the money we're salting away! And that isn't all! Soon, it won't be empty—ten shows from ten in the morning until midnight—but four a day! I signed that vodvil contract for you this afternoon, Jerry—52 weeks at \$3,000 a throw! Told you I'd put it over! I figure we'll use the proscenium arch of the theatre for your 'falling act,' enlarge your bedroom scene some . . ."

"Yes, and if I'm not careful, I'll go flying up among the flies and girds back-stage," said the Yogi.

"Oh, we can fix that. Use a canvas roof while you're on the stage, y'know, and back-stage, where you can't walk ceilings, we'll use hand-ropes for you. You'll live in the trailer, as usual. We'll back up to the stage-entrance and you get out right there. You'll be a sensation, boy! We'll get some bona fide scientists to study you and make statements to the papers. You know, that's why I been holding back on that stuff while we've been doing Fairs and Carnivals. It'll be great stuff, all right!"

"Sure, great stuff. Great if you can stand it. But how you can go out front and tell 'em I'm not a freak is beyond me. And I don't like you telling 'em I learned my stuff in India!"

"Now, look, Jerry, it's good advertising, that's all. Tell 'em you're a freak and you're just another one. This way it looks

like it's really scientific. Look, we'll change the spell, put in all that stuff you told me about space-time—con—continuum. . . ."

"Why don't you tell the truth? Why don't you say I'm a crack-brained experimenter who tried to nullify gravity, and I degenerated myself with the radiations of an unknown substance?"

"Oh, that's all right for these here scientists, kid," observed Bolton, "but the public's different. Believe me, I know. And your contract, if you remember, says I've got full say about these things. . . ."

"Yeah. Well, whatever you say, Frank. To tell the truth, I don't much care. God, if I could only go out and stand in the sunshine under the open sky once more! But if I did that, I'd shoot straight UP—and never come down again. . . . You know, I was trying to figure out my rate of speed by the time I got a hundred miles up! I wonder just how far I would go before I reached the negative state. I may try it—just stand outside and *let go!*" As he spoke, the White Yogi's voice sounded deep with despair.

Bolton looked startled. "Saaaay, none of that! Remember our five-year contract with three years to go yet. Also, kid, I've got a big investment in you! Don't go forgetting that you was stone broke when I took you off the ceiling of Mrs. Heeney's boarding house, third-floor back! She was ready to ask you to step outdoors, you know that. You wouldn't do anything like that to me, would you?" His voice was filled with whining anxiety.

Jerry Moore sighed deeply. "Of course not, Frank. I'm not ready to commit suicide yet. I still hope to get out of this predicament. Y'know, I've a standing advertisement in my home-town weekly newspaper promising a hundred dollars to the one finding a stone like the one I used in my machine. It isn't reasonable that that was the only stone. I'm sure it came from a meteorite. One part was pitted, the other side showed where it had broken off from

(Continued on page 110)

If This Were YOU— Laid Up By **SICKNESS** **OR ACCIDENT—**

What Would It Mean
To You To Get Up To
\$150.00
A MONTH?



Amazing New Policy

COSTS ONLY 3¢ A DAY

If sickness or accident should strike YOU—lay you up, disabled—stop your income, perhaps for months—don't face the additional worry of money for bills and expenses! Protect yourself and your loved ones with the remarkable low cost Sterling Sickness and Accident Policy! For only 3¢ a day this amazing policy provides ACTUAL CASH—to help pay bills and expenses! Pays you up to \$150.00 a month for sickness, including Hospital Benefits; \$100.00 a month for accident; pays as much as \$2,500.00 for loss of limbs, sight, or accidental death, plus many other liberal benefits, as provided in policy.

Pays Cash For Common Sicknesses And All Types Of Accidents

This policy covers sicknesses common to men and women, covers all types of accidents as happen every day in or by automobiles or trucks, on street, at home, on the farm, in factory, while at work, etc. Benefits payable from FIRST DAY, as explained in policy.

MORE THAN \$500,000.00 PAID

Young and old — men, women, children, ages 15 to 64 without Doctor's Examination — are eligible for this liberal insurance. More than \$500,000.00 Cash Benefits already paid on Sterling Policies. Big, responsible, Legal Reserve Stock Company. \$100,000.00 on deposit with State of Illinois Insurance Department for protection of all policyholders.

EASY MONTHLY TERMS

Because we deal direct with you and have no agents, your cost of this insurance is amazingly low. Only 3¢ a day, in easy monthly payments, brings you all these protection features. No dues — no assessments.

10 Days FREE INSPECTION

SEND NO MONEY! Here's our sensational offer. Write giving your age, and the name and relationship of your beneficiary. We will mail you Actual Policy on 10 Days FREE INSPECTION. No obligation whatever. Act Now.

STERLING INSURANCE CO.

563 Jackson-Franklin Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

Please mention DOUBLE ACTION GROUP when answering advertisements

LIBERAL BENEFITS AT AMAZING LOW COST

**AS MUCH AS
\$2,500.00**

paid to you IN CASH for
Accidental Death or Loss
of Limbs or Eyesight.

**UP
TO \$150.00**

a month for sickness including Hospital Benefits.

**UP
TO \$100.00**

a month for disability due to accident.

\$100.00

Cash paid as Emergency Aid or Identification Benefit.

OTHER LIBERAL BENEFITS

Doctor's bill for non-disabling injuries—10% increase in benefits for 5 years at no extra cost.

All Benefits as described on Policy.

(Continued from page 108)

another piece, maybe bigger. There must have been more to it, and if I could crawl around the spot, I'm sure I could find other pieces.

"You see, I've got to study that stone and find out what its properties are, to get back to normal. I don't know what possessed me to use the darn thing at all. I'd kept it as a charm since I was a kid on the farm. And one day when I wasn't getting any results from my Nullifier, the stone dropped from my pocket. I stuck it in the machine, and while I was bending over, adjusting the new tubes I had bought, the thing began to throw off a pink radiation!

"Before I could back away, though, there was a loud sizzling sound, a roar, and I was flung against the ceiling. When I came to my senses, the radiation was gone, but I couldn't get down to the floor. And the little stone had dissolved completely—well, you've heard it all; you know the rest. . . ."

"Sure, I know. My two-headed calf had died and I needed another fr—exhibition. I signed you up after I showed you you'd make plenty in five years to do all the experimenting you want to get down to earth again. I don't want you forgetting what I've done for you. You'll have plenty in the bank when this is over. Just—three more years. . . ."

"Yeah, I spoke out of turn, Frank. It's just that I'm so lonely and disgusted with this upside down living. Think of it—getting red in the face when I stand in a natural position!" he sighed deeply.

"S'tough. Shame you didn't have a girl assistant when the thing happened! You could've married her and gone house-keeping in the trailer!"

THE pseudo-Yogi laughed bitterly. "And we'd raise upside down kids, I suppose!"

Bolton looked at his watch. "Well, it's time for the next show. I can hear the

crowd. Come on down. . . ."

As he spoke, the midway concessioner took out a number of curved iron hooks, a few inches long. He began fastening them, one after the other, into holes provided for them in the side wall of the room. Several he screwed into the floor. As he was doing this, the upside-down man came to the wall and by means of the hand-holds, pulled himself to floor level.

With a twist of his body, he stood in a natural position, sliding one stockinged foot under the first of the floor cleats, then the next, until he stood beside the pair of shoes nailed firmly to the floor. Using Bolton to steady himself, he slipped his feet into the shoes while the other man tied the laces for him.

"Look, Jerry," Bolton said on straightening up. "Why haven't we tried fastening weights on your clothing? Enough of them ought to hold you down to earth!"

"What good's that with the blood rushing to my head when I stand like this? No, I thought of that long ago, but it's no go!"

"I see. Well, try to keep that silly look out of your eyes this show. . . ." He yawned as he spoke, removed the hooks he had inserted, and went through the curtains.

There were three more shows and it was supper-time. People left the midway in increasing numbers and the midway performers relaxed.

Bolton fastened a long rope from the side of the upside-down stage to the tent wall where there was an opening. On the other side was a large trailer backed up to the tent. Jerry Moore left the stage dragged himself along the rope until he reached the trailer door. He walked in upon the trailer's ceiling which was furnished much like the stage room, upside down. On the floor, however, was a second set of furniture for Frank Bolton. Under his settee was the bathtub both men used

As they went into the trailer, a waiter from a nearby restaurant came with a cov-

ered tray of food. He grinned at Jerry. "Some show you put on; I took it in today," he said as he put the tray down.

WHEN he left, the man on the ceiling sat in a chair above the ordinary table at which Bolton sat, and he performed the rather difficult feat of eating upside down while the speller ate his own food in the regular fashion.

A little later, Bolton came outside. He saw a young man coming alongside the tent to the trailer. "Here," he called to him, "you can't come back here."

The youth stopped in his tracks, waiting for the older man to reach him. "I'm looking for a Mister Jerry Moore, sir. They said this was his trailer."

"No one sees him while he's resting. Wait for the show," the speller said brusquely.

"But I gotta see him," protested the young man, who was no more than sixteen or seventeen. "I got something for him in—in answer to an advertisement. It said . . ."

"Ad? Oh, yeah. Let me see it."

The young fellow fumbled and brought out an envelope in which was a sheet of paper. Pasted neatly on the paper was a newspaper clipping. Moving over to a light, Bolton read:

"I WILL PAY \$100.00 for a translucent green stone with red flecks showing throughout stone to match one found in the vicinity of the old Moore farm along Beaver Creek. Size does not matter. Stone may be found imbedded in another kind of stone. Address, this week, York Fair Midway, York, Pa. Jerry Moore."

"That's been running in our paper a couple years with different addresses every week. . . ."

"I know—I put it there. Did'ya bring the stone?"

"Sure. Found it in the creek above the Moore place, though some Poles got it now. It was half under a rock in the water. . . ."

"Well, let's see it," said Bolton wearily.

(Concluded on page 113)

FOUR-FOLD WAY TO SCALP COMFORT REMOVE LOOSE DANDRUFF

To help the looks of your hair and remove loose dandruff, just use En-ar-co. Quickly it stimulates the surface circulation—and good circulation is vital to a good head of hair. It lifts up and dissolves the loose dandruff—it's just grand for the hair.



At all drugists or send 10c for trial size to National Remedy Co., 55 West 42nd Street, N. Y. C. Dept. M-7.

EN-AR-CO

Fistula Sufferers Face Danger

One of the tragic results of neglected fistula frequently is loss of bowel control together with nervous diseases and general ill health caused by self poisoning. Thousands could save themselves from humiliation and serious illness by taking proper treatment in time. The Thornton & Minor Clinic—oldest known rectal institution in the world—offers a FREE Book which explains Fistula and other rectal diseases; tells how more than 50,000 persons have been benefited by their mild, corrective institutional treatment—without hospital confinement. Write for this Free Book and Reference List. Address Thornton & Minor Clinic, Suite C-711, 926 McGee St., Kansas City, Mo.

MEN

Buy wholesale and sell, razor blades, tooth paste, shaving cream, personal needs, etc. Send for free, complete catalogue.

Keystone Rubber Co., Dept. D-7 96 5th Ave., New York City

SNAPSHOTS IN COLORS!

ANY ROLL DEVELOPED and 8 Amazingly Beautiful Prints in Natural Color. Only 25¢! Natural Color Reprints. 3c Each

NATURAL COLOR PHOTO, Room C-218 Janesville, Wis.

MAKE MORE MONEY

taking orders for Shirts, Ties, Underwear, Hosiery, Pajamas, Uniforms, Sweaters, Raincoats, Pants, Jackets, Coveralls, etc. No experience — No investment required. Sales equipment FREE. Write

NIMROD, #22-BB, Lincoln Ave., Chicago

FREE SAMPLES OF REMARKABLE TREATMENT FOR STOMACH ULCERS Due to Gastric Hyperacidity



M. H. Bromley, of Rhelburne, Va., writes: "I suffered for years with acid stomach trouble. My doctors told me I had ulcers and would have to diet the rest of my life. Before taking your treatment I lost a lot of weight and could eat nothing but soft foods and milk. After taking Von's Tablets I felt perfectly well, ate almost anything and gained back the weight I had lost."

If you suffer from indigestion, gastritis, heartburn, bloating or any other stomach trouble due to gastric hyperacidity, you, too, should try Von's for prompt relief. Send for FREE samples of this treatment and details of guaranteed trial offer. Instructional Booklet is included. Write

PHILADELPHIA VON CO., Dept. 100-H, Fox Bldg., Philadelphia Pa.



NOTE: This book will not be sold to anyone below 21 years.

Size of book is 6 1/2 x 9 1/2 inches; beautifully printed in clear type; 151 pages with illustrations; HARDCOVER; cloth binding.

FORMER PRICE \$3.00

NOW ONLY 98¢

At last the whole truth about sex! The time has come to bring this intimate and necessary knowledge into the light of day—into the hands of every adult man and woman who wants to lead a satisfactory, healthy, full love life. Written in simple and frank language—**SECRETS OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE** explains: How to attract the opposite sex—how to win love—how to conduct yourself during your honeymoon. The book teaches the proper sexual conduct in marriage and the technique of performing the sex act. The book explains the problems of the wife and how to solve them—and the problems of the husbands and how to overcome them. Sometimes they are actual physical disabilities, such as impotence, sterility, etc. The book advises you on correcting these difficulties. It also devotes a chapter to **"BIRTH CONTROL"** with reasons for and against—and the method of accomplishing. It features a table of "safe periods." It explains conception, pregnancy. In short, it is a complete teacher and guide on practically every phase of Love and Marriage.

"Secrets of Love and Marriage" is an endless source of intimate, intriguing information, from the first awakening of youthful love to the full flowering of grand passion... answering many questions you hesitate to ask even your closest friends. You must know the real facts and ways or be cheated out of life's most precious pleasures!

Let Us Send You This Book on Trial!

Send no money now. Just mail the coupon. When book arrives, deposit with postman 98¢ plus shipping charges, under our **MONEY BACK GUARANTEE**. You risk nothing. Mail coupon now.

**HERALD PUBLISHING CO., Dept. D. A. 7,
26 East 17th St., New York, N. Y.**

Send me "SECRETS OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE," in plain wrapper. I will pay postman 98¢ plus shipping costs on delivery. I can return the book, if not satisfied, and my money will be refunded. (I am over 21 years old.)

Name.....

Address.....

City.....

State.....

☐ Check here if you are enclosing \$1.00 with the coupon and thereby saving C. O. D. charges. Your book sent postpaid under same **MONEY BACK GUARANTEE**. Impossible to send C. O. D. to Canada; please send \$1.20 with order.

"SECRETS of LOVE and MARRIAGE"

Daringly Revealed

Edited by Dr. Edward Podolsky

This is an enlightened age. Are you one of those, still afraid to know the truth about the many intimate questions of man or woman? Or are you one of those who thinks—"I know it all"—and is actually unaware of many important facts and pleasures? Do you know how to live a complete, vigorous and delightful sex life? Do you know your part in the game of love? Every happy marriage is based, to a great extent, on a happy sex life. But how can you lead a satisfactory love life, if you do not know—or are not sure, of the many, many facts and ways of love, of marriage, of sex—of the 1000 ways of a man with a woman! Are you getting ALL that you expected, that you dreamed of—from your love, from your marriage, from your sex life? Or are doubts and difficulties in the art of love troubling you, holding you back, spoiling everything?

Offers a Liberal Education in Sexual Science

PART OF CONTENTS

Introduction by

Edward Podolsky, M.D.
Foreword by Dr. Howard W. Hensley

Need for sex understanding to aid married happiness—book offers key to true understanding of sex.

Chapter 1—Married Man Should Know

Instinct is not enough—the wedding night—pertaining to the honeymoon—functions of organs and body in marriage relations—willful woman can overcome difficulties.

Chapter 2—Love Problems of Wives

Why marriage fails—wife often frustrated, disappointed—husband and sexual relations—set routine grows boring—case of the under-sexed wife—how to keep love alive.

Chapter 3—Scientific Sex Program in Marriage

Marriage based on mutual love and co-operation—instructions for performing and following marriage sex program—chart of safe periods—normal frequency of relations.

Chapter 4—Functions of Organs

The purpose of sex—how conception takes place—secondary stimuli—woman—attaining highest pitch in compatibility.

Chapter 5—The Art of Married Love

The importance of co-operation—first act the courtship or love-making—second part of the coitus—many positions possible—anal sex or climax—half hour all too short—courtesan—developing mutual sexual rhythm—reaching a climax together—women often mistaken—problems of physical misfitting—overcoming difficulties.

Chapter 6—Secrets of Sex Appeal

What does a man notice—how to dress for charm and social—choosing clothing, attending to complexion, skin—sexuality.

Chapter 7—Dangers of Petting

It is wise to pet to be popular?—Embarrassing bodies and kissing too dangerous—grooming desire difficult to control.

Chapter 8—Choosing a Mate

Why children resemble mothers—importance of selecting proper life partner—many mistakes for more than physical reasons.

Chapter 9—Birth Control

A moral issue long debated—arguments in favor and against—fertilizing of children—mechanical contraceptives against law—various methods used—no method ideal.

Chapter 10—Wives as Sterilization

Many misinformed on subject—advantage to individual—advantage to society.

Chapter 11—Fertilization

Why marriage—sterilization—be had early in marriage—superstitions regarding pregnancy—how fertilization accomplished in sex union—satisfying fertilization—other methods—causes of infertility.

Chapter 12—Pregnancy

Courtesy—sterilization—first indications of pregnancy—care during pregnancy—active mother—abortion and miscarriages—dangers of pregnancy—preparations for birth—pregnancy 280 days approximately.

Chapter 13—New Tests for Pregnancy

Need for prompt diagnosis in many cases—how test is made—combination tests valuable.

Chapter 14—Can Sex of Unborn Child Be Chosen

Science investigating various theories—no certain results.

Chapter 15—Motherhood

Actual process of childbirth—follow doctor's instructions—causal operations—obstetrical fever—summary for expectant mothers.

Chapter 16—Methods of Easy Childbirth

Select doctor you have complete confidence in—follow his instructions—avoid anything that diminishes labor pains without injuring infant.

Chapter 17—Infants: Qualities of Husbands

Overcoming some common sexual problems—how to attain "control"—importance of courtesy—effect of frequency on control—overcoming frigidity in wives—can impotency be overcome—organic deficiencies—various faults and their remedies.

Chapter 18—Intimate Questions of Wives

Importance of free discussion with husband—avoid haste—be patient—strive for perfection—sex a matter—attitude and success—intimate women problems.

Chapter 19—Feminine Hygiene and Beauty

How to develop your charm and beauty—skin care.

Chapter 20—Reducing Weight

How to diet. Complete menu for famous Hollywood 18 day diet.

HERALD PUBLISHING COMPANY

26 East 17th St., Dept. D. A. 7, New York

(Continued from page 111)

"Hey, I wanna show it to Mr. Moore. My father said . . ."

Bolton glanced behind at the trailer, ran his tongue across his lips and turned back to the boy. "I'm Moore's manager, see, and I attend to all his business. Let's see the stone. If it's right, I'll give you your hundred." He reached into his pocket and brought out a thick roll of bills.

The boy's eyes bulged at the sight of the wad. Unhesitatingly, he took a fist-sized rock from his pocket. The overhead light showed its rough, deeply pitted black surface, but when he turned it over, Bolton saw a green irregularity imbedded in the roughness. It was translucent, flecked with reddish dots, the size of a small lemon.

"Paw says he bets the thing's a meteor. He says I oughta get morn'n a hundred because a museum would pay a lot of money. . . ."

"I wouldn't know about that," said Bolton, ripping five twenties from his roll. "It's worth a hundred to Kent, and museums don't go throwing money around."

"Shall I look for any more of 'em?"

"Well, I guess Mr. Moore only wants one. You may try selling the others to the museums," he laughed pleasantly.

For several moments, the man stood where he was. He glanced toward the trailer speculatively, then from a pocket brought out two more green stones that matched the one in the rock. "I'd like to stop that damned ad, but if I did, Jerry'd get hep to the fact I got these rocks. But anyway, these are my insurance that he keeps our contract! At that," he added to himself, "they may come in handy to show him if the fool wants to take a walk into the sky! I wonder how many more of the stones there are, anyway?"

He pocketed the three green stones and walked up the midway whistling contentedly, waving an arm to the barker from the freak show.

THE END

Don't Go Through Life Handicapped!

Improve your **APPEARANCE**
by wearing an

IMPERIAL HEALTH BRACE

Makes you feel stronger and more confident in undertaking any work, whether in a factory, office, store or home.



FOR MEN

Straightens the shoulders, expands the chest, reduces the waist and compels deep and proper breathing which assures correct posture.

FOR WOMEN

It can be worn with any gown as it is invisible. Improves and slenderizes the figure without dangerous diet.



FOR CHILDREN

The brace has a patented adjustable garter attachment to support the stockings. Makes the child walk right, sit right and grow up normally.

When ordering, be sure to give us the following information:

Man..... Woman.....
Boy..... Girl.....
Height..... Weight.....
Chest measurement under arms.....

Imperial Health Braces have been on the market for over 25 years. They were formerly sold at \$5.00 and \$6.00 each. Our **Special Price, P. P. prepaid, is..... \$1.50**

M. L. SALES CO.

Room 315 160 W. Broadway Dept. 7
New York City

WANTED

1000 MEN and WOMEN

**WORK FOR THE
UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT** ★
★
★
★

Salaries
\$1260-2600 Per Year
NO LAYOFFS! VACATIONS WITH PAY!
REGULAR RAISES! GOOD PENSIONS!

A LIFETIME JOB

Railway Mail Clerks ★
City Mail Carriers ★
U. S. Post Office Clerks ★

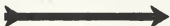
Rural Mail Carriers ★
Govt. Clerks—File Clerks ★
Stenographers—Typists ★

Pay for Course Only After You Are Appointed and Working

- ★ So sure are we that our simplified Interstate Home Study ★
- ★ Courses of coaching will result in your passing the examina- ★
- ★ tions and being appointed that we are willing to accept your ★
- ★ enrollment on the following basis. The price of our complete ★
- ★ 10-lesson course is \$30 plus \$3 Examiners Fee. ★
- ★ We are willing to give you any course with the under- ★
- ★ standing that you are to pay for the Course ONLY ★
- ★ AFTER YOU ARE APPOINTED AND WORKING. ★
- ★ Should you take the examination and fail, or not be ★
- ★ appointed for any reason whatsoever, the loss will be ★
- ★ ours and you will not owe us one cent for the course! ★

**Get Started Today
on a Lifetime Job!**

**Work for
Uncle Sam!
Free Particulars**



-----CLIP AND MAIL COUPON NOW!-----

INTERSTATE HOME STUDY BUREAU
Div. R.D.-4, 901 Broad St., Newark, N. J.

If you wish,
paste on post-
card and
mail

Please RUSH me full particulars without any obligation of how
to qualify for a Government job.

Name Please print plainly in pencil

Address

City State

Age Weight Height

"I Talked With God"

(Yes, I did—Actually and Literally)

and as a result of that little talk with God a strange Power came into my life. After 42 years of horrible, dismal, sickening failure, everything took on a brighter hue. It's fascinating to talk with God, and it can be done very easily once you learn the secret. And when you do—well—there will come into your life the same dynamic Power which came into mine. The shackles of defeat which bound me for years went a-shimmering—and now—?—well, I own control of the largest daily newspaper in our County, I own the largest office building in our City, I drive a beautiful Cadillac limousine. I own my own home which has a lovely pipe-organ in it, and my family are abundantly provided for after I'm gone. And all this has been made possible because one day, ten years ago, I actually and literally talked with God.

You, too, may experience that strange mystical Power which comes from talking with God, and when you do, if there is poverty, unrest, unhappiness, or ill-health in your life, well—this same God-Power is able to do for you what it did for me. No matter how useless or helpless your life seems to be—all this can be changed. For this is not a human Power I'm talking about—it's a God-Power. And there can be no limitations to the God-Power, can there? Of course not. You probably would like to know how you, too, may talk with God, so that this same Power which brought me these good things might come into your life, too. Well—just write a letter or a post-card to Dr. Frank B. Robinson, Dept. 300A, Moscow, Idaho, and full particulars of this strange Teaching will be sent to you free of charge. But write now—while you are in the mood. It only costs one cent to find out, and this might easily be the most profitable one cent you have ever spent. It may sound unbelievable—but it's true, or I wouldn't tell you it was.—Advt. Copyright, 1939, Frank B. Robinson.

DON'T LET RINGS AND VALVES WASTE OIL AND GAS!



Amazing Results in 20 Minutes

There's no guesswork about the results of the "C and Jay Method." Within 20 minutes after this remarkable product is used in your motor, you can see the benefits both in increased compression and on your speedometer. A single application lasts about 10,000 miles. Fully GUARANTEED — and carries up to \$5,000 insurance in one of the World's Largest Insurance Underwriters. (Lloyds of London.)

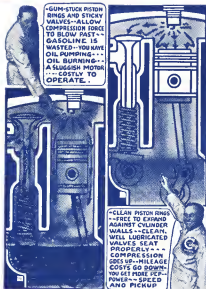
Exclusive Money-Making Territories Open! for District Managers, Distributors, Salesmen

To men of ambition, between the ages of 25 and 60, we offer an opportunity to connect with a recognized, well-established, fast-growing organization, marketing a product welcomed by motorists, garages, fleet owners, retail shops, and having the unqualified endorsement and approval of automotive dealers, truck operators and manufacturers who are now being supplied. The "C and Jay Method" is scientifically made, priced right and soundly merchandised. (Sells for less than "perk plugs.") If you want to cash in on this enormous demand for "C and Jay" send the coupon today for full details.

Before you spend a lot of money, tearing down your motor, buying new rings and grinding valves, use this proved method of purging gum, wax, sludge and sticky carbon from rings, valves and oil lines. Send coupon below for FREE-of-RISK FULL-SIZE-PACKAGE TEST OFFER.

SAVE OIL AND GAS

If your motor has lost power, pep and top speed—if oil and gas bills are keeping you broke—if compression is low due to stuck rings and valves, use this modern method of removing power-stealing substances present in oils and gasoline. Simple and quick to use.



Endorsed by Mechanics and Automotive Engineering

The "C and Jay Method" has been especially designed to take the place of old-fashioned, costly methods of tearing down motors. Created by experienced automotive engineers. Put through most exhaustive laboratory and road tests. Give your car new power, pep and top speed. Cut oil and gas consumption. Increase the life and use of your motor.

Send Coupon for Full Size Free-of-Risk Offer

If your car is gum-choked, wasting gas and oil, we want you to test a full-size package of the "C and Jay Method" without risk on your part. Let it prove to you, as it has to thousands of other car and truck owners, how you can condition your motor in a few minutes' time without any special tools. Send no money. Just mail the coupon today.

CRAVER-JAY CORP.
Dept. 767, Kansas City, Mo.

MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY

Craver-Jay Corp.,
Dept. 767,
Kansas City, Mo. (Paste on postcard and mail)

I want to take advantage of your FULL-SIZE-PACKAGE, FREE-OF-RISK OFFER. Also send me your big money-making plans.

Name

Address

City State

Year and Make of Car

BACKED BY 20 YEARS' EXPERIENCE!

The names of Craver and Jay have been favorably known to the automotive industry for nearly a quarter of a century. The "C and J Method" was developed and perfected to meet the demands of millions of motorists with oil and gas eating cars, caused by gum-stuck rings and valves. Welcomed by mechanics, car and fleet owners as one of the great discoveries to lower car upkeep costs. Sells for less than a set of spark plugs—and makes friends wherever introduced. Exclusive territories open on a fully protected basis.

PHONE, WRITE OR WIRE!

Let us show you how you can get started with us. Let us show you actual earnings of our District Managers, Distributors and Salesmen. The market is there—we have the product. You may be one of the very men we need. Write, wire or phone today.

CRAVER-JAY CORP., Dept. 767
Kansas City, Mo.
Reference—Automotive Trades Assn.,
K. C. Chamber of Commerce or
any bank or trust company